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E.J. van Wolde

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# A Semiotic Analysis of Genesis 2-3

A Semiotic Theory and  
Method of Analysis  
Applied to the Story of  
the Garden of Eden



studia  
semitica  
neerlandica

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Van Gorcum









# **A SEMIOTIC ANALYSIS OF GENESIS 2-3**

## **A Semiotic Theory and Method of Analysis Applied to the Story of the Garden of Eden**

**Een wetenschappelijke proeve  
op het gebied van de godgeleerdheid**

### **Proefschrift**

**ter verkrijging van de graad van doctor  
aan de Katholieke Universiteit te Nijmegen,  
volgens besluit van het college van decanen  
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**door**

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## PREFACE

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## INTRODUCTION

Modern biblical exegesis attempts to determine the meaning of biblical texts by means of both diachronic and synchronic methods. The diachronic methods, such as those of redaction criticism and tradition criticism and the historical-comparative methods, are aimed at an explanation of biblical texts based on the study and reconstruction of oral and written geneses or traditions. The synchronic methods, such as form criticism and literary criticism, seek to provide an explanation of the text on the basis of the study of the genres to which a text belongs and the study of the stylistic and literary composition of the text. The meaning of the elements in a biblical text is thus defined on the basis of a comparison with elements in other biblical texts. The commentary of Claus Westermann on the book of Genesis (Westermann 1974) may serve as an example of such modern exegesis. It is generally accepted as a good exegetic study which combines a diachronic, viz. tradition critical, and a synchronic, viz. form critical, approach. On the one hand he studies the text as it has come down to us, on the other hand he tries to explain the irregularities and contradictions in the text of Genesis on the basis of various traditions which (are supposed to) have preceded the formation of the text. The explanation of what he considers to be irregularities in the text is not based on the text itself, but on the notion that various traditions have supplied the textual elements and as a consequence have determined the meaning of the text.

This type of exegesis, which attempts to explain the unproblematical parts of texts on the basis of their present state, and the ambiguous parts of these texts on the basis of earlier oral and written stages, is in my opinion often unsatisfactory and leaves the need for an approach which takes as its object the text in its final form and in relation to its (intended) functioning with respect to a certain reading public or religious community. In this approach it is not the previous history of the text or the correspondence with other (biblical) texts that is decisive for its meaning, but the textual elements in their interrelation with each other and the reader.

This textual approach is related to certain developments in linguistics and literary theory, which from the beginning of this century have been aimed at formulating theories and analytical models concerning language, text and meaning. A closer examination of these theories shows that there are various traditions. Especially the tradition which runs from De Saussure and Russian Formalism, via the Prague and Copenhagen linguistic schools, to French structuralist semiotics is of major importance for biblical exegesis, since they focus on the totality of language and texts and have developed verifiable and formalized methods of analysis. In the field

of narrative texts, Algirdas Julien Greimas, more than anyone else, has been successful in developing a semiotic theory and analytical model. He formulated a theory of semiotics in which the process of the generation of meaning occupies a central place. According to him, people attribute meaning to the world and they translate the world into meanings. One of the ways in which they can do so is by means of written texts. Greimas describes the production of texts as a generative process and its result, the texts, as structures of coherent elements of meaning.

When applied to biblical texts, the views of Greimas prove to be very useful and usable, but there are also shortcomings. In the first place his theory considers every reference of a language or a text to the historic context and the extra-linguistic experience of life and vice versa as irrelevant. For Greimas, texts are not only autonomous, but also isolated entities. The inadequacy of this notion for biblical exegesis appears when one analyzes a biblical text of almost 3000 years ago. It is the very difference in the communicative context of past and present which makes clear that the generation of meaning is partly determined by the context. Now the second inadequacy of structuralist semiotics with respect to biblical research also becomes apparent. Meaning is regarded purely as a characteristic of the text, and in this interpretation is considered to be independent of the reader. At the same time it is apparent that different readers attribute different meanings to one and the same text. The various structuralistic analyses also show that there is more than one way to give meaning to a text. The communicative context and the experience of life as well as the reading experience of the reader prove to play an important part in the generation of meaning or *semiosis*. In other words, and contrary to the assumptions of structural semiotics, meaning proves to be the result of the interaction process between text and reader. Even though Greimas' semiotics has supplied many useful notions, it does not give sufficient credit to the reader's role in the process of giving meaning. It is necessary therefore to supplement this form of semiotics with the notions of a semiotics which does do justice to the dialectic process between text and reader.

The semiotics of Umberto Eco introduced me to the semiotics of Charles Sanders Peirce, who is as yet relatively unknown in biblical exegesis. However, I believe that Peirce offers the opportunity to open up the locked structuralist system of semiotics. As there has been no previous attempt to unlock structuralist semiotics by means of Peirce's semiotics, I have tried to supply this gap. Thus, in order to supplement the shortcomings of both "standard-exegetical" and structuralist analyses of biblical texts, I have developed the following semiotics. In this "new" semiotic approach the attention is focussed exclusively on narrative texts and the process of giving meaning or *semiosis* of the reader in a dialectic relation with the text. This semiotics consists of an explanatory (theoretical) and

an analytical model which are intended to be used for the interpretation and analysis of biblical texts. The implication for exegesis is that biblical texts are to be studied as texts whose meaning is determined by the mutual narrative, semantic and discursive relations between the elements in the text as well as by arrangement, supplementation and interpretation by the reader. On the one hand, the reader is not free when he gives meaning to a text, because he is oriented and directed by the narrative, semantic and discursive strategies of the text. The restrictions imposed by the text are therefore the basic conditions for his interpretation. On the other hand, the reader has a certain latitude, because he himself uses the possibilities of the text, fills in the gaps and supplements the openness of the text. The way in which both the text and the reader contribute to the generation of meaning, to the interpretation, is central in the present semiotic theory and analysis.

The result of this development towards a new approach to narrative texts is to be found in this present study, which is divided into a theoretical first part and an analytical second part. The first part presents an examination, discussion and homologation of the semiotic views of Greimas and Peirce. It also describes the present author's semiotic approach to narrative texts as well as the resultant analytical model for narrative texts, a model which makes it possible to analyze narrative texts semiotically by following a number of stages. This first part is a revision of (parts of) earlier articles published in *Kodikas/Code. Ars Semeiotica* 9 (1986), 331-366 and 10 (1987) 195-212.

The second part of the present study contains a semiotic analysis of Genesis 2-3, the story of the Garden of Eden. Its purpose is not only to test a semiotic theory and method, but particularly to come to an interpretation of Gen 2-3 - a text which has deeply interested me for years - in which justice is done to both the text itself and the part played by the reader, and which makes the various parts of the analysis explicit and verifiable. The analysis of Gen 2-3 has grown to a considerable length. As it is probable that the majority of exegetes are not primarily interested in semiotic theory, the analysis of Gen 2-3 has been written in such a way that it can be understood without any prior knowledge of semiotics. The relevant semiotic aspects of the analysis are explained on each occasion. Readers who are not familiar with semiotic theory are advised to read part two first; part one can be read later with part two in mind. For readers who are not trained in exegesis it may be noted that the analysis of Gen 2-3 can be read without a knowledge of Hebrew; the transcription of the Hebrew letters is geared towards maximum readability for readers who are unfamiliar with Hebrew.

The division of this study into two parts, with the chronological order of the theoretical part followed by the analytical part, requires an explana-

tion. The exegesis of biblical texts gave rise to a need for an adequate text theory and analytical model. The present semiotic theory has been developed with this need in mind and in a dialectic with other semiotic theories and then has been verified by means of concrete analyses of narrative texts. This process, in which hypotheses arise from the analytical practice and are formulated as the basis of a general theory, which in his turn has to be verified by other analyses, is here presented in an inverted order. First, the theory and analytical method are presented, so that the reader is able to understand the background of the semiotic approach to a narrative text and is able to use the semiotic analytical method on his own. Then, the analysis of Gen 2-3 is presented, so that the reader can better understand the theoretical and analytical consequences of the semiotics here presented and may possibly arrive at a new outlook on this important biblical text.

## PART I: THEORY

### 1. GREIMAS AND PEIRCE

Algirdas Julien Greimas' semiotics is concerned with semantic and narrative structures of language and culture and is based on a model which explains texts as the result of a process of meaning generation. This generative process is conceived as a trajectory of progressive investments of content and consists of three successive stages, which lead from the most abstract and fundamental investments toward the most concrete and figurative. In the practical part of his semiotics, Greimas has developed both a semantic and a narrative model especially suited for the analysis -or rather construction- of a text. Charles Sanders Peirce's semiotics is a "logic of thinking", a theory of knowledge. He described people's thought-processes as interpretations or processes of giving meaning by means of signs. His concept of the process of interpretation can also be understood as a generative process in different stages.

The aim of this chapter is twofold: first, to describe Greimas' generative semiotics and elements from Peirce's semiotics; second, to show that the ideas of Greimas and Peirce are complementary and can be homologated. Of these aims the second, the homologation of Greimas and Peirce, is the most important. This homologation will be the basis of a generative semiotic approach of narrative texts, which will be described in the next chapter.

#### 1.1 Greimas

##### 1.1.1 The General Starting-Points of Greimas' Semiotics

In his semiotics, Greimas gives an explanation of the way in which people give meaning to things. According to him, this generation of meaning, being based on the human perception of differences, is the construction of relations or networks of relations between objects in the world. The grasping and producing of differences and relations is the core of the meaning generation, which can be summarized as the transposition of objects into meanings, or the transposition of meanings into other meanings (DS:introd.; Dict:352f;298f).<sup>1</sup> Relations have been a core concept in the structuralist

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<sup>1</sup> The first number after Dict refers to the page of the original French text; the second number refers to the page in the English translation.



tradition since De Saussure. It was he who described language as a system of relations between language-signs, which in turn consist of the relation between that which is signified, i.e. the various relations between units of meaning within a language, and the signifier, i.e. the language-specific relations between units of sound. But whereas De Saussure focussed on static relations, Greimas is mainly concerned with grasping and producing these relations; he focusses on the production or transposition of meanings.

Following in the footsteps of Hjelmslev (1943, 1961), Greimas further clarifies the process of meaning generation. The world appears as an amorphous mass of possible meanings: people restrict the unlimited potential of meaning by distinguishing substances of expressions and substances of content, or meaningful categories and units. These substances only exist from the moment they take shape in language or culture: they are created by the form of expression and the form of content. This is why Greimas, following Hjelmslev, only considers the shaping of the substances in language of importance for meaning. Human subjects produce meanings by the formation or articulation<sup>2</sup> of the content form and by linking this with an expression form into a sign. A sign does not refer to the outer-semiotic world, but to the substances that have already been distinguished by people within a certain language and culture.

There are different ways in which substances can be articulated, and they result in different sign systems, such as chemical, literary, and theological sign systems. These can be linked with each other, but not with the outer-semiotic world: inner-semiotic relations are possible, outer-semiotic references are not. This is also true for the everyday semiotic system which we experience as "natural", as not constructed by human beings. People are born and raised in a pre-ordered world in which substances have already been distinguished for them, and Greimas calls this the "natural world". With given natural languages they join in old patterns and create new ones. They live within a "natural semiotics" or "natural semiotic system", which is the combination of a natural language and a natural world,<sup>3</sup> and it is impossible for them to transcend this semiotically constructed and transposed world (Dict:233.310.340; 259.287.374).<sup>4</sup> Within

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<sup>2</sup> Greimas uses the word "articulation" to designate all forms of semiotic organization which create distinct and combinable units of meaning. Articulation is consequently the production, creation, generation or formation (shaping) of meaning. It will also be used in this chapter in this sense.

<sup>3</sup> Greimas uses the term "natural semiotics" with a double meaning: he uses it as the term for the study of the natural world and natural language, and as a synonym for the combination of the natural world and natural language, i.e. as the topic of this study.

<sup>4</sup> From the point of view of Lacan and Kristeva one can wonder how it is possible that education and training fail in a natural semiotics, as in cases of insanity, aggression etc.

this natural semiotics and with the aid of natural languages people give meaning by articulating different substances in expression and content forms. Throughout the structuralist tradition these expression and content forms have only been considered separately; little or no attention has been paid to the link between the two. Greimas only dealt with the content form.

Four facts stand out in Greimas' view on meaning generation or semiosis as presented above. Firstly, semiosis is not considered an individual process of meaning generation done by an individual subject<sup>5</sup> but is conceived as the construction of meaning by subjects functioning within a culture, within a natural semiotics. Secondly, each relation to an outer-semiotic world by an individual subject is negated or deemed irrelevant. Thirdly, Greimas limits the concept of semiosis to the connection between expression form and content form, and he is not concerned with the process of differentiating substances. And finally, as a traditional structuralist he seems to attach a lot of importance to the connection between signifier and signified or between the expression form and content form; in practice, however, the separate parts are focussed upon and not their relation. Furthermore, Greimas limits his research to the content form.

Greimas is inspired by the Prague phonologists, who studied the expression form. As they came to the conclusion that the expression substances are articulated by means of phemic (sound-) categories, Greimas postulates that the content substances are articulated by means of semic (meaning-) categories (Dict:277;232). Whereas Jakobson, one of the members of the Prague linguistic circle, distinguished twelve universal binary phemic categories, Greimas postulates some twenty binary semic categories (SS:110; Dict:327;273). According to Greimas, the sets of phemic and semic categories constitute the innate language universals or semantic categories which people use to create signs. But whereas Jakobson succeeded in determining the phemic categories and describing their hierarchical structure, Greimas and others have not been able to define either the twenty semic categories, or their hierarchy. Greimas admits (Dict:327;273; Interv:271) that the goal - which was first formulated in the 60's - of providing linguistics with the necessary means for an exhaustive analysis of the content plane of natural languages has turned out to be unattainable. Still he maintains that it is probable that there is a limited number of semiotic categories, and that it is possible to study the content plane with a limited number of semic categories. These postulates remain fundamental to his semiotics.

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<sup>5</sup> In this study the term "subject" refers to a human subject, not in the idealist sense, in which the subject can be known in its very essence and independent of its production, but in the sense of productive subject, i.e. a subject considered in its behaviour towards objects and other subjects.

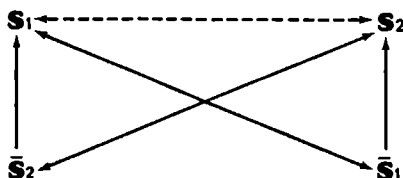
### **1.1.2 The Generative Trajectory of the Articulation of Meaning**

According to Greimas, the articulation or production of meaning cannot be explained in terms of a genetic process with meaning more or less automatically evolving as time goes on. It should be thought of as a human productive, constructive or generative process (Dict:157-164; 132-134). When articulating or constructing meaning, everyone follows the same trajectory, beginning with the most simple and abstract relations and ending with the most complex and concrete relation networks. Greimas distinguished three levels along this trajectory. The first level is the fundamental logico-abstract deep level, the very first form in which meaning is generated by means of semic categories. Greimas describes this level in his fundamental grammar. The second level is the anthropomorphic narrative surface level, where the elementary meaning-forms of the deep level are given an anthropomorphic form, that is to say where they are encased in anthropomorphic subjects and objects, and their actions. Greimas describes this level in his narrative grammar. The third one is the figurative level, where actants and their actions are expressed as images and are situated in place and time as story-characters. Greimas describes this level in his discursive grammar. The entire generative trajectory is concerned with the production of the signified or content form. The content form thus generated is provided with an expression form in semiosis, so that meaning can be visualized. The visualization of meaning - the addition of the expression form - can take place at any generative level: the expression form (phoneme) can be added both to elementary and to anthropomorphic and figurative meaning-structures, with a sign as the immediate result. Since Greimas is especially interested in the content form and not in the expression form, he concentrates on the generative structuring of meaning which precedes the level of the sign (Interv:267).

### **1.1.3 The Fundamental Grammar**

In his fundamental grammar Greimas studies the first level on which the content form is articulated, the starting-point of the trajectory of the generation of meaning: the logico-abstract deep level (Dict:294;69). This is the level of concepts and operations, which constitute the basis and the infrastructure of the other two levels, and which in the end produce texts or narrative discourse. This, the first stage of the generation of meaning, is based on the human capacity to observe objects and to use the perceived differences between them for categorisation. Using sound (phemic) categories man can express these differences and oppositions in sounds (phemes); using meaning (semic) categories man can express these oppo-

sitions in units of meaning (semes). Jakobson explained the articulation of sounds in terms of the binary principle (Dict:278;233), as a simple relation of opposition: the presence *versus* the absence of a pHEME: pHEME *vs* non-pHEME. Greimas adopts the binary principle, but reinterprets it as a structure of multiple opposition: according to him a meaning is not just characterized by the presence or absence of one unit of meaning or seme,  $s_1$  *vs* non- $s_1$ , but also by the presence or absence of another seme,  $s_2$  *vs* non- $s_2$ .<sup>6</sup> Even the most elementary meaning is determined by the structure of opposites between the four semes  $s_1$ , non- $s_1$ ,  $s_2$  and non- $s_2$ . Greimas rendered this structure of opposites visual in his so-called semiotic square (DS:137; Dict:31;308).



To put it into words: a perceived difference between objects is expressed in the most elementary way by means of a network or structure of six relations of opposition between two elements of meaning,  $s_1$  and  $s_2$ : two relations of contradiction,  $s_1$  *vs* non- $s_1$  and  $s_2$  *vs* non- $s_2$ , two relations of (sub)contrariety,  $s_1$  *vs*  $s_2$  and non- $s_1$  *vs* non- $s_2$ , and two relations of implication,  $s_1$  *vs* non- $s_2$  and  $s_2$  *vs* non- $s_1$ . This is the most elementary taxonomy, i.e. structure of values or semes, used by people to articulate a content form. It is the first stage in the generation of meaning, which can be represented by a semiotic square.

The semic categories which constitute the potential of the human generation of meaning, are either of an exteroceptive/figurative nature or of an interoceptive/non-figurative nature (Dict:141.146-149.191.338; 114.117-120.158.282). Consequently, the meanings which are articulated in relations of opposition on the basis of these categories are also exteroceptive or interoceptive in nature. Hence there are exteroceptive or kernel semes, i.e. basic semes or essential semes, and interoceptive or classemes, i.e. general semes. Originally, Greimas conceived exteroceptive semic categories as categories which derive their characteristics from the outer world by

<sup>6</sup> For example: the meaning of "beggar" is not only determined by the presence of  $s_1$  /poor/, but also by the absence of  $s_2$  /rich/; "beggar" =  $s_1$  + non- $s_2$ .

means of perception. Later, having reduced the problem of reference to a theory of natural semiotics and the natural world, he prefers the term *figurative*.<sup>7</sup> In this way he wishes to convey that these semic categories do not refer to the outer-semiotic world, but to the expression-plane of natural semiotic systems.

The fact that Greimas uses the terms *figurative*, *figure* and *figurativization* in two senses in his semiotics, gives rise to problems. On the one hand he uses them in connection with the above-mentioned figurative semic categories of thought and their articulation at the various levels. On the other hand they function as terms which are specific to the discursive level. The terms *figurativization* and *figurative trajectory* are used only in connection with the articulation of the semantic units and relations within the discursive level, whereas the terms *figure* and *figurative function* on all levels. In Greimas' practical analyses, however, as in those of other members of the Paris School, the terms *figure*, *figurative*, *figurativization* etc. are only used in connection with the discursive level. To avoid this kind of ambiguity in the use of these terms in this chapter, I will restrict the terms *figure*, *figurative* and *figurativization* etc. to the discursive level, and will adopt the term *exteroceptive* for the semic categories of thought and their articulation at the deep level and the surface level.

People use *exteroceptive* semic categories to give meaning to the world. This must mean that the categories refer to the perceptible qualities of the world. The *exteroceptive kernel semes* are the units of the content plane of natural languages which correspond to the units of the expression plane of the semiotics of the natural world; they correspond to the perceptible qualities of the world. By means of *interoceptive* categories people signify independently of the world. The *interoceptive classemes* are the units on the content plane which do not refer to the outside world. They constitute the inner-semiotic contexts of a discourse.

Until now we have been dealing with the paradigmatic organization or static structure of semes and their relations to each other. They are described by what Greimas calls *fundamental semantics*.<sup>8</sup> The dynamic aspect of those semic relations or the syntagmatic organization of the deep level is the subject of a *fundamental syntax*. Combined the *fundamental semantics* and *fundamental syntax* form the *fundamental grammar*.

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<sup>7</sup> Greimas uses three pairs of terms throughout his work. As appears from Dict:191;158 they are related as follows:

semiological : semantic = exteroceptive : interoceptive = figurative : non-figurative.  
In the Dict. he shows a preference for the last pair.

<sup>8</sup> He uses the term *semantics* also as a synonym for *paradigmatic organization*. Just as with natural semiotics, which functions as a term for culture as well as for the study of culture, he uses the terms *semantics* and *syntax* to indicate the topic of investigation, *paradigmatic* and *syntagmatic organizations* respectively, and the investigation itself.

The fundamental syntactic description shows that the articulation of meaning, as described in the taxonomic model of the semiotic square, is rendered dynamic. This happens by means of actions or operations on the semes. The first operation is negation, which runs along the axis of contradiction: by means of negation  $s_1$  generates non- $s_1$ , and  $s_2$  generates non- $s_2$ . The second operation is assertion, which focusses on the sub-contrary terms: non- $s_1$  remains non- $s_1$ , non- $s_2$  remains non- $s_2$ . Assertion entails implication: non- $s_1$  becomes  $s_2$ , and non- $s_2$  becomes  $s_1$ .<sup>9</sup> These operations of negation, assertion and implication succeed one another, amounting to one big transformation. There are two possibilities here: either  $s_1$  is transformed into  $s_2$  via non- $s_1$ , or  $s_2$  is transformed into  $s_1$  via non- $s_2$ . In short, the elementary semantic structure with its four logical semic terms and six relations (fundamental semantics) is made dynamic by the operations of negation and affirmation so that there can be changes in the semantic structure (fundamental syntax); together they constitute the first stage (fundamental grammar) of the generation of meaning.

### 1.1.4 The Narrative Grammar

Greimas studies in his narrative grammar the second level on which meaning is generated: the narrative surface level. Just as at the deep level (and, as we will see later, at the discursive level) two forms of organization can be distinguished on the surface level, viz. the paradigmatic and syntagmatic organization. The paradigmatic order is described by means of semantics, the fundamental, narrative and discursive semantics respectively, and involves the choice of elements and their static relation pattern. The syntagmatic organization is described in terms of syntax, the fundamental, narrative and discursive syntax respectively, and deals with the linking of elements in dynamic relations. As in the previous section, these two forms of organization will be discussed separately in this and the next section.

From the paradigmatic angle, the transition from the deep level to the surface level amounts to a selection of the deep level-values on the surface level, and the linking of the chosen values or semes in a sememe, which is comparable to the linking of phemes in a phoneme. The narrative semantics which describes this paradigmatic organization on the surface level, indicates how the semes, selected from different semic categories are linked into a sememe (Dict:331;277). A sememe contains kernel semes or

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<sup>9</sup> C. Bremond (1972) criticized Greimas' taxonomic model. He also criticized the implicational relation: from the point of view of logic the implication does not go from non- $s_1$  to  $s_2$  and not from non- $s_2$  to  $s_1$ , but in the other direction from  $s_2$  to non- $s_1$  and from  $s_1$  to non- $s_2$  (p.374).

articulations of exteroceptive semic categories, and classemes, which are the result of interoceptive semic categories.

The kernel semes or exteroceptive semes are the most characteristic elements of a sememe, they are the minimal units of meaning of a sememe. For example, the sememe "head", has among others the kernel semes: /extremity/ and /superativity/ (SS:43-50). These kernel semes correspond to what people derive from the world by means of perception; they refer to images of the world (exteroceptivity).

The classemes or interoceptive semes are the elements in a sememe which are derived from the context. It is only in combination with other sememes that a particular sememe reaches its full meaning: the kernel semes provide the basis for a sememe, but this basic meaning is supplemented by the contextual semes or classemes with meaning which is specific to the discourse in which the sememe functions. Hence, a classeme is a seme which recurs in a discourse and which guarantees the semantic line or isotopy of a discourse by its reappearance in different sememes. An isotopy is based on the recurrence of a classeme within a syntagmatic string of discourse. It provides the discourse with a homogeneity and in this way the isotopy reveals the paradigmatic order of the discourse (Dict:197;163). Thus a sememe consists of a number of semes which are determined by people's images of the outside world, the exteroceptive semes, and of semes which are determined by the context of discourse, interoceptive semes or classemes. Consider the following pieces of discourse: 1. Joseph was knocked on the head; 2. He brought things to a head; 3. He was at the head of the platoon. In all three examples the sememe "head" has the kernel semes we mentioned earlier, /extremity/ and /superativity/, but different classemes, for example /human/ in 1 and /non-human/ in 2, /bodily/ in 1 and /non-bodily/ in 2 and 3. The classemes do not refer to perceptible qualities of the world, but they are based on conceptual distinctions and are of an interoceptive nature. Greimas is convinced that the number of classemic or interoceptive categories people use to categorize the world is small, and he mentions twenty as a possible number (SS:110; Dict:327;273). The classemes in a sememe constitute the text-specific choices from these categorizations of the world. But since Greimas has not yet succeeded in making an inventory of these twenty classemic categories nor in defining them, the concepts of classeme and isotopy can only be postulated.

The paradigmatic organization of elements of meaning at the deep level differs from their organization at the surface level. On the one hand, it is the deep level which provides the semic possibilities from which the surface level makes a choice; hence the meanings at both levels are equivalent. On the other hand, meaning is richer at the surface level than at the deep level (Interv:272). In combining semes from exteroceptive categories and a restricted number of classemes we get new sememic combinations.



These sememes can be combined in an unlimited number of ways to constitute texts. This is why the transition between these two levels is called conversion: the meanings on both levels are equivalent, but the second level contains new meanings as a result of the combinations.<sup>10</sup> This newness of meaning is also determined by the fact that values or semes which were only virtual at the deep level, are actualized at the surface level. For exteroceptive semes are combined, classemes are integrated into context, and thus the sememes function as actualized meanings in (con)texts.

The meaning at the surface level is not only paradigmatically but also syntagmatically enriched (Dict:381-383; 332-334). The logical operations of assertion and negation on the deep level are actualized in the actions of anthropomorphic actants at the surface level. Their interaction is the core of a narrative, or rather, of the articulation of meaning in a narrative, and it is expressed as  $EN = F(A1, A2)$ , which means that the content of the narrative (*énoncé narratif EN*) is a function ( $F$ ) of at least two actants ( $A1, A2$ ). The first stage of this narrative generation of meaning is the investment of a sememe in one actant. In this way this actant becomes an object of value for another actant, namely the subject. The second stage consists of, first, the establishment of the subject and, second, the activity of that subject to acquire the object of value, thus the subject becomes a "subject of action"  $S_A$ . In order to enable the subject to perform satisfactorily, the subject should be prepared and have the desire, ability and knowledge to do so, in other words it has to be competent. The subject should have acquired the modalities or modal objects (having to, wanting to, knowing how to and being able to) in order to be able to acquire the object of value. From the moment the acting subject has acquired the object of value, it absorbs its semantic value. It has then become a "subject of state"  $S_S$ , that is a subject in conjunction with an object of value: it has reached a semiotic existence of its own by means of this semantic value.

In a narrative, different situations appear in succession. In the beginning it is possible that a subject is not yet present: it is being established, but it has no modal objects and no objects of value yet. Then the subject performs an action to acquire modal objects. If this action is successful the subject can perform on the basis of the competence acquired in the qualifying test, a test which the subject undergoes in order to qualify for or to reach competence. If a performance is effected, in the decisive test, the acting subject becomes a subject of state, that is to say a subject in

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<sup>10</sup> Here, Greimas implicitly answers Bremond, who criticized him for paying attention to general meanings only. According to Bremond, only the deep level meanings have any importance for Greimas, since neither the surface level nor the discursive level offer new meanings. Cf. Bremond (1972).

conjunction with an object. This is followed by recognition, the glorifying test: the subject's performance is acknowledged. After that, a complete narrative process can be repeated: a new object of value appears on the scene, the subject becomes a subject of doing by executing a narrative programme, it acquires modal objects and objects of value, resulting in a gradually more complete semiotic existence.

According to Greimas, the model with the three tests, the canonical narrative model, is not only the basis of each narrative programme. It is also an ideological model of life (Dict:245;204; Interv:269). It shows how people shape their lives, and how they try to attain certain objectives in life by means of different qualifications and different kinds of competence. Looked at from this point of view, the narrative model is an explanation of life as a narrative trajectory which people follow via consecutive narrative programmes. Until now, the narrative trajectory in a narrative has been restricted to the possibility of one subject acting and realizing one or more narrative programmes. However, most texts have two subjects, not one, and each of them follows its own trajectory. Their trajectories meet and this leads to conflicts. Hence it is better to describe the narrative structure as a binary structure, based on the controversy between two subjects, which are both bound to perform their contractually fixed narrative programmes.

Greimas says that, from a genetic point of view, the narrative grammar is the source of each semiotic process (Dict:383;334). The concept of the elementary content of the narrative (*EN*) is actually only a narrative formulation of the fundamental relation between human being or subject on the one hand and world or object on the other: the narrative programmes are a narrative rendition of the transformation of things by human beings. From a generative point of view, however, the narrative grammar comes after the fundamental grammar. Before meanings can function as objects of value they should be virtualized, logically speaking. After this logico-conceptual articulation has taken place, meanings can start functioning as actual forms, as sememes and actants or as objects of value relating to subjects. The relation between the values or articulations of the world and the anthropomorphic subjects is the core of the generation of meaning: if the subjects are connected with these values, they acquire content and become meaningful. From all this it appears that Greimas sees the generative process of the production of meaning not just as an explanatory model for narrative meanings, but also as a model that concerns life itself. He said so explicitly when discussing the narrative schemes, the qualifying, decisive and glorifying tests as stages in the acting of narrative-subjects, and as stages in the life of ordinary human beings, and it appears here once more. The narrative grammar mirrors a general relation between a subject or human being and an object.

As human beings give meaning to the world and thus acquire meanings or values, they attain as subjects a semiotic existence. "Le sujet construit le monde en tant qu'objet tout en se construisant ainsi lui-même"; the subject constitutes the world as an object and in doing so it constitutes itself at the same time (Dict:127;104). I would like to add that it is clear from Greimas' explanation that it is only the subject that determines the value of the world; the object itself does not contribute to this process. The conceptualization, actualization and dynamization of the object are all due to the subject.

### **1.1.5 The Discursive Grammar**

This fundamental point of view of Greimas concerning the relation between the meaning giving subject and the object also occurs in his view on the enunciator. It determines his explanation of the third generative level: the discursive level. Greimas defines the enunciator as the sender of the communication and as the discourse-producing subject (Dict:125-127;105). The enunciator expresses the narrative structures of the surface level in specific themes, images or characters at the discourse level, by setting them in a specific time and place and by adding names and figures (Dict:147.358.387.394; 119.306.337.344). This organization of the discourse is accomplished by means of the procedures of the so-called disengagement and engagement (Dict:79-82.119-121; 87-91.100-102). The enunciator starts operations of disengagement, in order to project the actants and their actions, time and place, outside his own person. The "I" in the discourse does not refer to the enunciator himself, neither do time and place. After disengagement comes engagement: the enunciator provides the discourse with themes and images by means of which it seemingly refers to the everyday world. However, this reference is an illusion: these images, too, refer to a world constructed by the enunciator, namely, to the discourse-specific semantic universe. By means of disengagement and engagement, the enunciator constructs a discursive structure out of the semio-narrative structures: values which have been virtualized on the deep level, and actualized at the surface level, are thus concretely realized in images, characters, time and place. In realizing this discourse the enunciator attains semiotic existence: in constructing the discursive content, he constructs himself, just like any other subject creates its own semiotic existence by constructing an object. The enunciator derives the competence to construct a discourse from the semio-narrative level, and achieves performance on the discursive level.

The transition from the surface level to the discursive level is determined by a conversion procedure, as was the transition from the deep to the surface level. One could say that from the paradigmatic point of view,

the enunciator adds themes and figures to the values actualized at the surface level, thematization and figurativization, while generating meaning on the discourse level. Thematization is the first semantic conversion procedure. It is the formulation, or expression, of one semantic value in many different ways throughout the discourse; it is the distribution throughout the content of the narrative. This results in a thematic trajectory: an isotopical, but distributed manifestation of one value, expressed in different structures. The thematic conversion procedure is succeeded by a figurative conversion procedure: figurativization. A certain figure is linked to a certain theme, which results in a concatenation of isotopic figures: the figurative trajectory. The enunciator can use two kinds of figures: abstract figures, and non-abstract figures or icons. He uses abstract figures for the conversion of values and themes distributed throughout the discourse, and icons to give depth to the figures. The "iconization" is the last stage in semantic meaning-generation: the iconical make-up of the figures is used to create a semblance of the world and to create a referential illusion (Dict:177.312;147.260). Naming is also a part of this procedure; aiming at creating a similarity to an external referent and at producing the meaning effect "reality", it can situate the discourse historically (Dict:261; 219). Summing up we can state that according to Greimas, there is no a priori referent in the process of meaning generation or transposition of objects into meanings. There is only an enunciator who provides the reference for an enunciatee. There are no fixed truths or realities prior to this process, as they only exist as meaning effects produced by the enunciator. Hence the generation of meaning is not an ontologically based activity; it is a construction of meanings and a creation of referential illusions. This concludes the generative trajectory semantically.

From the syntagmatic point of view, the surface level is converted into the discursive level by the addition of elements referring to time, place and character. In other words: the conversion-procedures of the surface level are "temporalization", "spatialization" and "actorialization". The narrative programmes are set in a certain time and space, and ordered within those dimensions. Up to this point, the narrative programmes were only ordered logically; now, a specific temporal order is added. This makes it possible for the sequence of events in a narrative to differ from the logical sequence of the narrative programmes. Spatial and temporal programming thus reorganizes the narrative content. This spatio-temporal setting of a discourse also creates an illusion of reality. (Dict:312;261) By means of the procedure of actorialization, thematic and figurative elements are caught under one autonomous figure, the actor, who performs his own actions. The semantic (thematic and figurative) and syntactic (actantial performance) components converge in the actor. Hence the conclusion that in the characters or actors all strings converge in the generative trajectory:

the string of the semantic values, virtualized, actualized and realized is linked to the syntactic string of the actants and their actions (DS:49-66).

This concludes the last stage of the generative trajectory of the construction or generation of the content form. It is the generative explanatory model Greimas developed from 1966 to 1979, and which he recorded in his Dictionary. The diagram presented on the next page is a schematic representation of this model.<sup>11</sup>

### 1.1.6 Some Additions from *Du Sens II*

In *Du Sens II* (1983), a collection of papers from the period 1973-1983, there are three apparent modifications. They will be presented in this section as follows: first, the additions concerning the relation between subject and object; then, those concerning modalizations; and, lastly, those concerning communication.<sup>12</sup>

Up to 1983 Greimas' semiotics was mainly a semiotics of the subject: the subject plays the leading role in the relation between subject and object. It is the subject which constructs a meaningful object; the object barely contributes to the construction. This applies to the subject of the enunciation, the enunciator, as well as to the subject of the enunciate (*énoncé*), i.e. the subject within the text. Starting with the distinction of relations of opposition between objects and the articulation of those oppositions in semes and semic relations at the deep level, and ending with the articulation on the discursive level, where the subject-enunciator dresses up the meaning by means of figures, icons, times, places and characters, while this dressing up is not borrowed from the object, but created by the enunciator, it becomes clear how the subject transposes the object into an object of enunciation. This is also true for the subject of the enunciate (*sujet de l'énoncé*). The narrative surface structure shows how the subject gives value to the object, constructs and acquires this object of value, and how it thus transforms both the object of value and itself. In this way the subject transposes the object into meaning in both enunciation and enunciate (*énoncé*).

In the introduction of *Du Sens II* (7-18), Greimas for the first time suggests the possibility of a semiotics of the object separate from that of the subject. Apart from the phenomenon of construction and transformation of objects by subjects, he now also acknowledges the phenomenon of perception by the subject and the active contribution of the objects to the construction of the subjects. He suggests this in two sentences which are

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<sup>11</sup> This schema is based on the schema of Dict:160;134. Apart from this it is based on SS, DS and DS2.

<sup>12</sup> The numbers in brackets in this section refer to pages in *Du Sens II*.

EXPRESSION FORM	CONTENT FORM		CONTENT SUBSTANCE	EXPRESSION SUBSTANCE	
The sound-structures determined by the linguistic code, generated by means of twelve phemic categories	The generation of the content form by means of (exteroceptive and interoceptive) semic categories via the following generative trajectory <b>GENERATIVE TRAJECTORY</b>		Units of matter dependent on culture	Sounds dependent on culture	
	paradigmatic organization	syntagmatic organization			
	<b>DEEP LEVEL</b> <b>semio-narrative structures</b> (logico-abstract)  virtualization of values	<b>fundamental grammar</b> <b>fundamental semantics</b> Articulation of the perceived relations into values by means of semic categories. These semes pattern in a structure of relations, represented by the taxonomic model and by the semiotic square			<b>fundamental syntax</b> Logical operations of assertion and negation performed on the values or semes within an elementary taxonomic structure Two larger transformations may be the result from S <sub>1</sub> via S <sub>1</sub> to S <sub>2</sub> or from S <sub>2</sub> via S <sub>2</sub> to S <sub>1</sub>
	<b>SURFACE LEVEL</b> <b>semio-narrative structures</b> (anthropomorphic)  actualization of values	<b>narrative grammar</b> <b>narrative semantics</b> Selection of semes and combination in sememes consisting of -exteroceptive kernel-semes providing exteroceptive isotopies -interoceptive classemes providing interoceptive isotopies			<b>narrative syntax</b> Incorporation of values in an actant which so becomes an object of value The subject acts to acquire this object -acquisition of modal objects or qualifying test -acquisition of object of value or principal test -recognition of the performance of the subject or glorifying test
phemes	conversion	<b>DISCURSIVE LEVEL</b> <b>discursive structures</b> (figurative)  realization of values	<b>discursive grammar</b> <b>discursive semantics</b> Realization of values in -themes values of one kind dispersed in the discourse -figures icons, abstract figures  The enunciator realizes the values by means of engagement and links themes and figures to the enunciatee's empirical world and creates referential illusions	<b>discursive syntax</b> Temporal and spatial organization of the narrative programmes on the surface level Actorialization amalgamation of thematic and figurative elements in the actants's actions and in one character or actor  The enunciator disconnects by means of disengagement places, times and characters exist independent of the enuciator, they constitute an autonomous discursive context	
phonemes		conversion			

The generation of meaning according to Greumas

quoted here in full because they are so striking: "S'il n'est plus besoin d'insister sur le rôle primordial du sujet qui, lors de la perception, va au-devant des objets pour construire à sa guise le monde naturel, la problématique peut néanmoins être inversée en affirmant le "déjà là" des figures du monde qui non seulement, de par leur être, seraient provocatrices, "saillantes" et "pregnantes" (selon la terminologie de René Thom), mais qui, en poussant plus loin, participeraient activement à la construction du sujet lui-même (Levinas). Ce retour du pendule, pour redoutable qu'il soit, permettrait peut-être, à la sémiotique de dépasser, une fois de plus, les limites qu'elle s'est imposées, ne serait-ce que, par exemple, pour s'interroger sur les possibilités d'une esthétique sinon objective, du moins objectable." (13) Whereas the influence of the object on the subject and the subject's generation of meaning was deemed minimal before, Greimas now suggests that a semiotics of the object, in which objects actively participate in the construction of the subject, is possible. This novel idea cannot easily be incorporated into the semiotics of the natural world and the subject-oriented generative model. So it becomes necessary to construct a broader framework in which both subject and object, with their respective constructive powers, can be placed. In the third section of this chapter (1.3) I hope to demonstrate how Peirce's semiosis can fulfill the role of general framework for Greimas' semiotics of the subject and a semiotics of the object.

The modalities and the modal structure of a text are the second theme on which *Du Sens II* sheds new light (67-102).<sup>13</sup> The modalities, which had been restricted to the narrative surface syntax and to the subject's competence in acquiring an object of value, get to play a more extensive role. By asking questions like: "Why are objects desirable? Why do some subjects want specific objects more than other subjects do, or why are they better at acquiring them?" (10) Greimas discovers that a text is not so much concerned with the objects that have to be acquired, but with the characteristics or modalities of subjects and objects. The modalities of the acting subject (having to, wanting to, knowing how to and being able to) provide the subject with its qualities, its modal competence. The modality of the object, and hence also of the subject of state,<sup>14</sup> provides the subject with its modal existence. The extent to which a subject is connected with an object (modal existence) and desires objects or is capable of acquiring them (modal competence) determines the static or dynamic dimension of a

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<sup>13</sup> In his interview with Stockinger Greimas mentions two revolutions in semiotics. 1. The revolution brought about by linking Lévi-Strauss' paradigmatic deep structures to Propp's syntagmatic surface structures in one generative model. 2. The discovery of the modalities and the expansion of their functions (269).

<sup>14</sup> This identification of object and subject of state once more demonstrates the extent to which Greimas' semiotics is subject-oriented.



narrative text. According to Greimas, these modalizations do not only play a role in narratives, but in all of life (12). In connection with the above-mentioned view that people go through three stages in their lives, viz. qualification, realization and recognition, Greimas puts forward the idea that the genetic disposition which life is based on, should be understood as a modal organization which provides each human being with his specific competence.<sup>15</sup>

The modalizations do not only exert a profound influence on the narrative surface level, but also on the deep level (93-102). The semic categories on the deep level, which were considered to be self-sufficient before, are now related to their environment. The semic value can relate to its environment in a positive or a negative way, that is to say "euphorically" or "dysphorically". In other words: the normal semic category is supplemented with a thymic category, a category which indicates the atmosphere. The relation to the environment can be positive, euphoric, or negative, dysphoric. Consequently, the taxonomic semic value becomes an axiological value, a value related to its environment. The thymic category of the deep level corresponds to modalization on the surface level. It is the very relation of a semic content to an environment which is translated into the modal relation between subject and object at the surface level. The above-mentioned conversion can now be specified. The semic value which was still only virtual at the deep level is actualized at the surface level by the investment in objects which are related to subjects. The thymic value which indicated the relation of the value to its environment at the deep level is represented anthropomorphically at the surface level in the modalization of the relation between subject and object.

These modalizations have an influence on the discursive level of the generation of meaning, where the enunciator performs his duties within the general framework of communication between enunciator and enunciatee. It is in *Du Sens II* that Greimas for the first time deals with this communicative process at some length (104-134). He no longer regards communication exclusively as the transference of knowledge (*faire-savoir*) on the part of the enunciator; it is also a transference of belief (*faire croire*). Believing plays an important role in Greimas' view on communication. It is the communicative point of departure: in order to achieve communication a kind of mutual understanding (*contrat fiduciaire*) between enunciator and enunciatee is necessary. Building on this mutual understanding the enunciator generates meanings, following a generative trajectory, which result in a text or discourse. As we saw in the description of the discursive level, this discourse does not contain any general truths or any correspon-

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<sup>15</sup> It looks like a new semiotic interpretation of the old doctrine of predestination: each human being is born with a fixed amount of modalities which predetermines all his life.

dences to the outer-semiotic world. It is based on probability, on creating a semblance of truth. The enunciator produces a discourse with the meaning effect "truth", so that the enunciatee will adhere to the proffered statement. The enunciator tries to persuade the enunciatee into believing. From the enunciator's point of view, communication is a succession of belief transference or mutual understanding, information transference or meaning generation and another belief transference or persuasion and manipulation. On the part of the enunciatee communication is a succession of believing, knowing and believing. This last believing is not just accepting that which is proffered. It consists of a comparison with what the enunciatee already knows and believes, of making it compatible with his own cognitive universe. This cognitive universe is not an encyclopaedia with images of the world, but a network of formal semiotic relations: a network of paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations. The enunciatee selects paradigmatic and syntagmatic relations of equivalence and identifies and orders them on the basis of his own cognitive universe. So the enunciatee may or may not believe the discourse. If the process has a positive outcome, the enunciatee absorbs the semantic relations of the discourse in a close and complete adherence.

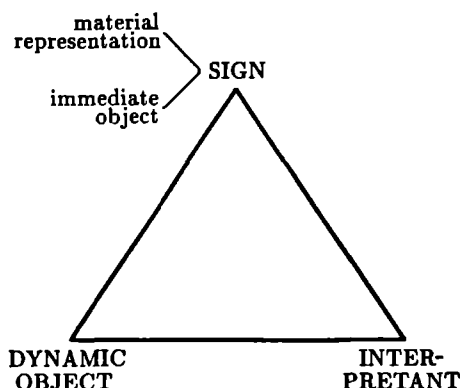
## 1.2 Peirce

Whereas Greimas' semiotics is concerned with meaning structures and their generation, Peirce's is a general epistemology concerning the knowing and thinking of human beings by means of signs.<sup>16</sup> Peirce is concerned with the process in which human beings signify to the world or interpret the surrounding world by means of signs. Like Greimas' explanation of the articulation of meaning as a generative process, Peirce's explanation of the process of interpretation can also be seen as a generative process. He describes interpretation or *semiosis* as a process in which people, influenced by reality, generate signs by means of which they assign ideas, concepts or meanings to reality. So Peirce and Greimas give different meanings to the term semiosis. For Greimas semiosis is the connection between the expression form and the content form and in his opinion semiosis adds nothing to meaning. For Peirce semiosis is the general process of giving meaning by means of signs. According to Peirce, essential part of the semiosis or process of interpretation by means of signs are the meaning effects: the integration of the newly articulated meanings in the existing cognitive

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<sup>16</sup> This description of Peirce's semiotics is only concerned with those elements which complement or clarify Greimas' semiotics. For a more elaborate description of Peirce's theory, see a.o.: M.A. Bonfantini (ed.) 1980; G. Deledalle 1978; M. Fisch 1978, K.Oehler 1979c; E. van Wolde 1984.

structure, which can lead to a new way of thinking or behaving. Peirce calls this effect of the interpretation the “interpretant”. Consequently, Peirce acknowledges three components to be essential for semiosis: the reality, the sign and the interpretant. This may be represented as in the following figure.<sup>17</sup>



In order to understand Peirce’s semiotics and the part the three components of semiosis play, this section will contain three parts in which firstly the relation between sign and reality (1.2.1), secondly the relation between sign and interpretant (1.2.2), and thirdly the general process of semiosis (1.2.3) will be described.

### 1.2.1 The Relation between Sign and Reality

Semiosis is sparked off by reality. People are confronted by (a part of) reality which imposes itself more or less forcibly on the human senses. This reality, which operates independently of human beings, and which exerts an influence, is called the “dynamic object” by Peirce.<sup>18</sup> Although the dynamic object influences people, they do not have direct access to it but only know it via conceptual images. On the one hand such a conceptual image is indeed a result of the operations of the dynamic object, but on the other hand it is also influenced by the knowing subject. This conceptual content is called the “immediate object” by Peirce, because it is the only accessible image of reality we have (CP 4.536; 8.343). This immediate

<sup>17</sup> This figure is largely derived from M. Bonfantini 1980, p. XXXV. It is similar to figures by other authorities on Peirce. Cf. also Peirce’s own schema in CP 2.264 and 8.376.

<sup>18</sup> In CP 8.13 Peirce defines the dynamic object as “a thing existing independent of all relation to the mind’s conception of it”. Cf. also CP 8.12 and 4.536

object, together with its material representation, constitutes the sign, the mediating body used by people to create meaning. The immediate object is comparable to Saussure's signified or to Hjelmslev's and Greimas' content form, its material side coincides with the signifier or the expression form.

Peirce recognizes the major contribution by the subject to the conceptualization of reality, but he does not negate the influence of the dynamic object. The sign, consisting of the immediate object and the expression-side, originates in an interaction between subject and object. It is the result of a dialectical interaction between subject and object. The extent to which either subject or object exert influence on the conceptualization in signs may vary. Peirce distinguishes three possibilities:

1. The dynamic object exerts a direct or unmediated influence on the generation of the content form or the sign. So the meaning can only function on the basis of a physical-causal relation to reality. In this case we are dealing with an indexical sign or index (CP 2,248.283-287.304-306).
2. Only the subject exerts influence on the generation of meaning, and as a consequence the formation of signs is completely dependent on the (inter)subject's own rules and conventions. In this case Peirce uses the concept of symbolic sign or symbol (CP 2,249.292-302).
3. Both the dynamic object and subject are actively involved in the generation of meaning and both exert an influence on the conceptualization of reality in the immediate object. In this case we have an iconic sign or icon (CP 2,247.276-282).

In the generation of meaning the indexical, symbolic and iconic aspects are present simultaneously, but only one is dominant.<sup>19</sup>

The iconic stage in the generation of meaning interests us most. Both Greimas and Peirce think that the world presents itself as a set of virtual meanings, that is to say everything can become meaningful and everything can function as a sign. In his semiotics, Greimas assumes that the transposition by human beings of possibilities (virtual meanings) into meanings does not depend on possibilities existing a priori. According to Greimas the object does not even co-determine the realization of possibilities or the generation of meaning by the subject. Peirce, however, did study the relation between possibility in the world and realization in signs by the subject, and thematized it in the iconic stage of signification. According to him, meaning is not generated arbitrarily or merely determined by an

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<sup>19</sup> In a letter to Lady Welby (1904) Peirce defines these three aspects as follows. "In respect to their relations to their dynamic objects, I divide signs into Icons, Indices, and Symbols. I define an Icon as a sign which is determined by its dynamic object by virtue of its own internal nature. (...) I define an Index as a sign determined by its dynamic object by virtue of being in a real relation to it. (...) I define a Symbol as a sign which is determined by its dynamic object only in the sense that it will be so interpreted." (CP 8.335).

intersubjective convention, but a particular shaping of meaning can function as a sign or carrier of meaning because of its inherent representational qualities (CP 2.276;4.536). For example, quite a number of things in reality contain the inherent possibility of functioning as a phallic symbol or sign. But not all things contain that meaning. The generation of meaning needs a certain expressive quality - in this case "something vertical". Something can function as a sign on the basis of certain representative qualities which constitute the basis for the iconic sign. Hence, "Anything fit to be a substitute for anything that it is like" (CP 2,276) is Peirce's definition of the iconic sign. By itself an icon is virtual. It could become a sign for a reality because of its inherent representative quality, but it depends on the subject for its realization. So the relation between the meaning potential of reality and its realization by the subject lies in the representative quality of the iconic sign: this quality is present in the world (dynamic object) and in the conceptual content (immediate object). Both subject and dynamic object influence an interpretation on an iconic basis. The object provides the virtual figurative qualities, the subject realizes the meanings by using signs which represent the figurative qualities. It is the iconic qualities of new signs which make it possible for new interpretations to be understood. Because of the iconic qualities, new interpretations, new links between dynamic object and immediate object can be transferred to and recognized by an addressee. The iconic stage of semiosis pre-eminently explains how people can provide new meanings for the world time and again, and how others can understand those new meanings.

Peirce's approach to perception proves valuable as an addition to and explanation of the relation between sign and reality. We saw how Greimas in his introduction to *Du Sens II* distinguished between perception, where the object constructs the subject, and the generative trajectory of giving meaning, where the subject transposes the object. Peirce distinguishes between sensation, perception, perceptive judgement, argument, and theory. Subject and object are represented in each case to a greater or lesser extent, and they exert a mutual influence (CP 4.539-541). In sensation the object's influence is decisive: the object forces the senses to register. In the next stage of perception the subject plays a role of its own: we get a first kind of interpretation of the material acquired through sensation. The object still plays a considerable role, but in the following stages, judgement, argument and theory respectively, the object's influence decreases as the subject's increases. Throughout this process, from perception up to and including theorizing, the dialectic relation between subject and object is present to a certain extent.

### 1.2.2 The Relation between Sign and Interpretant

According to Peirce, the relation between sign and reality has to be considered in connection with a third, very important factor of semiosis: the interpretant (CP 5.473-476; 8.343). Signs and signifying systems do not function independently of reality, nor do they function solely in relation to it; they mediate between the dynamic object and an existing flow of thought. Each articulation of reality in signs should be complemented by its location in a string of previous meaning generations. Whenever we construct meanings it is not the first time, nor will it be the last: each instance of meaning giving is incorporated in a flow of preceding and succeeding meaning givings. The mental concept which is the result of meaning giving in the flow of thought, is called interpretant by Peirce. The interpretant is the effect of an interpretation on the mind and the behaviour of a person. In Peirce's own words (CP 2.228): "A sign (...) is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign. That sign which it created I call the interpretant of the first sign." So, for Peirce, the interpretant is also a sign: arrived at through the mediation of the sign, its effect can only be known by the mind as a sign, i.e. represented in some form (CP 5.251).

Within the interpretant Peirce distinguishes three aspects. The first aspect is called the "immediate interpretant". This is the bare grasping of the semantic content of a sign; in language it is the connection between expressive form and content form. In a letter to Lady Welby (Peirce 1977:36) Peirce gives a clear definition: "My immediate interpretant is implied in the fact that each sign must have its own peculiar interpretability before it gets any interpreter. Each sign has its own interpretability, and the immediate interpretant is the correct understanding of this interpretability."

The second aspect of the interpretant is the incorporation of the immediate interpretant in the existing pattern of thought. After it has been understood in its primary meaning, a sign is explained within the mind of a person and translated into other signs. Thus it is placed within a flow of thought or a reasoning process. This actual incorporation of the sign is called the "dynamic interpretant" by Peirce (CP 4.536; 8.343). Whereas the immediate interpretant is primarily a task of the sign itself, the dynamic interpretant is based on the interaction between the sign and previous thoughts. The sign starts to function in the world of effects which already exist in the mind of an interpreting or signifying person. The dynamic interpretant is the pre-eminent interpretant: it is the actual and individual process.

The third and last aspect of the interpretant is the "final interpretant". By completely internalizing the dynamic interpretant, a new inter-

pretative habit is born, and possibly also a new mode of behaviour; this is called the final interpretant by Peirce. He defines it as "the effect that would be produced on the mind by the sign after sufficient development of thought" (CP 8.343). It is the potential influence of a sign on any kind of consciousness, circumstances permitting the sign to perform its function completely. The final interpretant is the interpretative result, which any interpreter or meaning giving subject tries to attain. Whereas the dynamic interpretant is the actual active effect, the final interpretant elevates it to a general state, to a habit. But as interpretation by means of signs is a continual process, where signs in particular relations to reality continually evoke new effects or interpretants, the final interpretant, as a residue of previous interpretations, also exerts an influence on new dynamic interpretants. As habits they also influence new and actual effects. The final interpretant takes care of the continuity in the process of interpretation or semiosis: as an interpretative habit, whether converted into concrete action or behaviour or not, it constitutes the basis for new interpretants.

### 1.2.3 The General Process of Semiosis

According to Peirce, no knowing, interpretation or semiosis exists independently of a representation in signs (CP 2.230;4.536). Reality or dynamic object does give the first impulse to meaning giving or knowledge: it influences people, whether they want to be influenced or not. Still reality can only be known when it is presented in some form, i.e. as immediate object,<sup>20</sup> and when this immediate object functions within a subject's flow of thought, in other words when it is related to previous effects or interpretants.<sup>21</sup> Thus the sign mediates between object and interpretant: it establishes a relation between object and interpretant which corresponds to the relation between sign and object (CP 8.332). The concepts of representation and representamen<sup>22</sup> express this mediating activity. A sign or representamen consists of three relations: it is related "to some thought that interprets it, to some object to which in thought it is equivalent and

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<sup>20</sup> Since the immediate object is a certain design, an articulation or shaping of content within the sign, it can also be called sign-form.

<sup>21</sup> So the interpretant is the functioning of a sign-form in a flow of thoughts and therefore it can also be called sign-function.

<sup>22</sup> Peirce's definition of "represent" in the Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology (1902) (included in CP 2.273) reads as follows: "To stand for, that is to be in such a relation to another that for certain purposes it is treated by some mind as if it were that other. (...) When it is desired to distinguish between that which represents and the act or relation of representing, the former may be termed the "representamen", the latter the "representation"."

in some respect or quality that brings it into connection with the object."<sup>23</sup> These three sign relations, between sign and interpretant, sign and reality, and the sign within itself, constitute the basis for semiosis. Moreover they clearly demonstrate an important principle of Peirce's: in each act of knowing or interpretation three a priori categories are present simultaneously, viz. "Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness" (CP 2.84-96. 243-264; 8.327-341).

The category of Firstness or possibility concerns the very essence of a thing, a quality within itself. Because it is unrelated to any other quality, Firstness is an insufficient basis for thinking or knowing. On the other hand, as a quality, it is a pre-condition for knowing: it can become meaningful in relation to something else. In semiosis this process is present in the relation to the sign within itself. The category of Secondness or actual existence concerns the essence of something in relation to something else. It is this actual existence which exerts a "brute force", which challenges and relates. Secondness is the impulse to know and the object of knowledge. In semiosis, this category is present in the relation between the sign and the dynamic object. The category of Thirdness or habit and law concerns the essence of something which mediates and makes a mental link. The relation is established by means of mental mediation, which results in a systematic habitual relation. In semiosis, Thirdness is present in the relation between sign and interpretant. According to Peirce, possibility or Firstness, correlation or Secondness, and mental mediation or Thirdness, are simultaneously present in each process of thought. The triangle of semiosis represents the dialectic relations between the three aspects. It clearly shows that meaning generation or interpretation cannot be reduced to the relation between sign and reality (Secondness), but that the internal quality of the sign itself (Firstness), and the mental mediation in the interpretant (Thirdness) are also necessary. In order to clarify what these categories are all about, we will now have a look at the consequences of this categorization for semiosis.

Reality is active all the time and exerts an influence independent of human beings. Only when people use signs to articulate a certain aspect of the dynamic object, and to present it to their mind, i.e. the set of existing interpretants, they can know part of the dynamic object. In order for this to be possible, it is necessary that the sign has an a priori quality first of all (Firstness) which can be used to express the aspect concerning the dynamic object. Furthermore, the dynamic object should exert an influence and present a challenge (Secondness). Then this challenging influence can be expressed by means of the virtual qualities (Firstness) of the sign. For reality to be known from a certain angle, it has to be

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<sup>23</sup> Olshewsky 1981.88.



expressed in a certain way; this necessitates a combination of Firstness and Secondness. However, real knowledge only comes into existence when the immediate object is incorporated in the mind of a person and when it functions within an existing chain of interpretants (Thirdness). Almost anything can function as a sign because of its virtual possibilities. But knowing or semiosis only exists from the moment something is related to reality and moreover, functions in a person's mind, that is to say gives rise to effects. The incorporation and the further integration of the immediate object is described by Peirce as the making of inferences. The knowing or signifying subject constructs propositional relations or inferences between immediate objects and the subject's own cognitive structure. Peirce distinguishes three types of inferences: abduction or hypothesis, induction and deduction (cf. CP 2.96). The outcome of this process of interpretation is a new interpretative habit, a new knowledge, which in its turn will influence the person's later processes of thought and his later actions. This is the essence of Thirdness, according to Peirce: habit, not as a final state, but as a mental continuum. This can be renewed under the influence of new confrontations with reality, Secondness, and by means of sign structures, which originate from the category of Firstness.

The categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness are not just present in the general process of semiosis; they can also be traced to the individual relations (CP 2.243-264; 8.327-341.342-379).

1. Within the relation of the sign itself or Firstness, we can distinguish three aspects. a. The sign as a pure possibility; this is what Peirce calls a tone or qualisign. b. The sign considered in its actual existence; this is what Peirce calls a token or sinsign. c. The sign considered in its fixed mental interpretation; this is what Peirce calls a type or legisign.

2. A sign in relation to the dynamic object or Secondness, can also be subdivided into three categories. When the relation between subject and object depends on the sign itself in the first place, that is to say on the sign's own quality which is actualized to express a relation to reality, it is iconic. When the relation depends on a physical-causal link between the sign and the dynamic object, that is to say when reality exerts a force, which is the basis for the content form of the sign, then we get an indexical relation. When the relation depends on the person, that is to say on the set of previous interpretants creating a mental link between the sign and the dynamic object, the relation is symbolic.

3. A sign in relation to the interpretant or Thirdness contains the same three aspects. The immediate interpretant, the interpretability of the sign proper, indicates the limits and the possibilities of the interpretation. The dynamic interpretant is the actual and definite effect. The final interpretant is the generalization and the provisionally fixed mental mediation, the result of the process of interpretation.

The categories of Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness are present in all processes of knowing and interpretation, in each semiosis and in all the relations of semiosis. Firstness indicates the possibility of correlation, the essence of a thing irrespective of relations. Secondness indicates the actual active influence, the concrete correlation, while Thirdness indicates the real triadicty, the generality, and the continuity. These three categories pre-eminently show that Peirce considers semiosis as a continuous generative process, with different stages in a necessary succession exerting influence on one another.

### **1.3 A Homologation of Greimas and Peirce**

The semiotics of Peirce and Greimas agree upon meaning giving or semiosis as a generative process.<sup>24</sup> But their elaborations of the process are different as to its aim and background. According to Peirce semiosis is a continual sequence of and interaction between dynamic object, a sign and an interpretant. In Greimas' description of the generative process, the whole productive or generative competence is placed in the (inter)subject. This subject articulates the content form autonomously in three successive stages: from the abstract deep level, via the anthropomorphic surface level to the figurative discursive level. This means that Greimas assumes that the subject signifies independent of reality and that the articulation of meaning, or the content form itself is independent of reality. Still, the productive subject does not take up a central position in his semiotics. The networks of meaning or meaning structures in their generative origin and existence form the core. They are the basis, the central axis of Greimas' semiotics. Peirce's semiotics, on the other hand, does not only pay attention to meaning structures, but also to the relations between sign or meaning structure, object and interpretant. Moreover, he also deals with communication and behaviour in relation to semiosis. Both from the ontological and epistemological point of view, Peirce's semiosis is a general process of interpretation related to reality, which functions within people's general and communicative behaviour.

As in my opinion there is a close connection between all aspects of semiosis, which can be described as a generative process with subjects, objects and signs or networks of meaning as components, I would like to demonstrate in this paragraph that Greimas' semiotics contains all these components, in spite of his rejection of reality and his limited attention to the influence of communication on the articulation of meaning. In 1.3.1 I want to show that reality does exert a certain influence on the transposition of reality into meanings by the subject: it exerts influence on the content

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<sup>24</sup> In these and the following subsections I use the term semiosis in the Peircean sense.

substances and on the content forms. In 1.3.2 I intend to show that the articulation of meaning by the subject is co-determined by the way in which meaning will function within a communication, or by an intended effect on the interpretation and behaviour of other subjects. For clarity's sake, the relations are treated separately; we should keep in mind however, that they constitute an indivisible process of semiosis.

### 1.3.1 The Influence of the Dynamic Object on Semiosis

Peirce describes the influence of reality on semiosis or the generation of meaning in several stages and nuances. Greimas, on the other hand, sees both the differentiation of the content substances and the generation of content forms as an autonomous process by the (inter)subject. This process takes place both independently of and separately from reality.

Greimas considers the distinguishing of various content substances to be culture bound: it is more or less fixed for an individual subject growing up in a predetermined culture. This does not mean that culture might not also be (in part) determined by factors of a non-semiotic nature. How else could you explain the differences between e.g. Western European, Middle-African and Chinese cultures, if you take for granted that all human beings have the same number of classemic semantic categories at their disposal? Climatic, physical, biological, economical and social factors appear to have some influence on the establishing of a culture's content substances.

The second and most important stage in the transposition of reality into meaning concerns the articulation of the culture-bound content substances into content forms. Greimas always took the generative role of the subject as the starting-point for his description of this process, without taking or wanting to take the role of the object into account. It is only in his introduction to *Du Sens II* that he begins to leave some room for the recognition of the object's influence on the subject. In spite of the limited role he ascribes to the object, it is still possible by means of Peirce's distinctions to indicate the contribution of reality along the whole of Greimas' generative trajectory, from the lower to the higher level, from the deep to the discursive level.

The generation of meaning takes place with the help of the semic categories which are partly exteroceptive, partly interoceptive in nature. In *Sémantique Structurale* (65) Greimas still recognized that the exteroceptive categories are influenced by reality: "Situées à l'intérieur du processus de la perception, les catégories sémiologiques (= extéroceptives) en représentant, pour ainsi dire, la face externe, la contribution du monde extérieur à la naissance du sens. Envisagées sous cet angle, elles paraissent isomorphes des qualités du monde sensible (...)." In *Du Sens* (39-40), Greimas gives a similar description. This view, that the world influences

the origin of meaning by means of isomorphic exteroceptive categories, is in complete agreement with the iconic moment of Peircean semiosis. It is this isomorphism, this representative quality, which determines the iconic character of the exteroceptive categories.

The *Dictionnaire* reveals major changes in this respect. In this book, Greimas completely isolates semiotics from the outside world. He argues that the exteroceptive categories and consequently the realization of these categories in exteroceptive semes do not refer to an outer-semiotic reality. On the contrary, they correspond to the expressive level of natural semiotics, and we get a purely inner-semiotic affair. For the definition of the exteroceptivity Greimas uses the same wording each time (Dict 141.146.149; 114.117.120): "correspondence to the expressive level of natural semiotics". The question as to the exact nature of the correspondence is never answered. It cannot be a correspondence between the form of the semes and the sememes at the content level and the form of phemes and phonemes at the expressive level: semes do not have the same form as phemes, nor do sememes have the same form as phonemes. The meaning of this definition can only be gleaned from Greimas' practical semantic analyses of exteroceptive semes or kernel semes, and from the somewhat more elaborate definition in the *Dictionnaire* of exteroceptive semes. In *Sémantique Structurale, Du Sens* and *Maupassant*, Greimas provided the exteroceptive kernel semes for "head" and "phallic symbol". According to him "head" has the kernel semes /extremity/ and /superativity/; "phallic symbol" has /verticality/ as a kernel seme. On top of that, he provides the following definition in his *Dictionnaire* (333;279): "Les sèmes figuratifs (ou extéroceptifs) sont des grandeurs du plan de contenu des langues naturelles, qui correspondent aux éléments du plan de l'expression de la sémiotique du monde naturel, c'est-à-dire aux articulations des ordres sensoriels, aux qualités sensibles du monde." On the basis of this more elaborate definition and of Greimas' analyses we can conclude that some of the semes which the subject attributes to the object on the basis of perceived differences between objects are exteroceptive or isomorphic to the perceptible qualities of the world. The same is true of the exteroceptive semic categories on which the functioning of the exteroceptive semes is based: they are isomorphic to the perceptible qualities of the objects and are based on the iconic relation between their own exteroceptive form or quality and that of the world. Still, this does not mean that the exteroceptive semic categories and semes are exactly the same as objects in the world, nor that they are established directly, without mediation by the subject. Although the world presents itself as a virtuality of meanings, it is the subject which actually realizes the meanings, and which uses exteroceptive and interoceptive semes for this purpose. The exteroceptive semes can, on the basis of their iconic quality, act as recognizable and

transferable units of meaning. Their correspondence with and isomorphy to the non-semiotic world and their incorporation into larger meaning-structures by the subject are the two building blocks for their functioning as exteroceptive units of meaning.

The problem is that Greimas seems only able to believe in extremes in his *Dictionnaire*. He only considers two alternative positions. One can either accept a priori that the whole semiotic system is a representation of the world with iconicity as its first characteristic, where discourse does not install semiotic figures, but ready-made images of the world. Or one can look upon a text as the result of a progressive production of meaning in a generative process, where semiotic structures and figures are established step by step (Dict 148;119). He provides a one-sided meaning for iconicity: "the belief in iconicity has the consequence that one gets lost in a labyrinth of positivist pre-suppositions; one will consider semiotic systems as immense analogies of the world." (Dict 177;147) Greimas does not recognize Peirce's elaboration of the concept of icons as signs to which both subject and object contribute, nor does he recognize the possibility of a dialectical relation between subject and object. In diametrically opposing the world and the semiotic systems, Greimas is forced to deny all influence of the world in his semiotics. The outline of Greimas' point of view in this respect could be clarified by a comparison. A semiotic system can be compared to a map: on the one hand there are certain similarities to the country it represents, while on the other hand it is the product of a subject. Whereas Greimas still recognized the relation between map and country in *Sémantique Structurale* and in *Du Sens*, in the *Dictionnaire* he started to consider the map as an entity which is independent of the country and which is solely determined by the (inter)subject's construction. In his introduction to *Du Sens II* Greimas again seems to recognize some influence of the country on the map.

Now that these more general considerations have been dealt with, we can go on to examine the separate levels of meaning generation which are the consequences of the iconic relation, which is at the basis of the exteroceptive semic categories. In the first stage of meaning generation, described in the fundamental grammar, a subject selects from semic categories and applies this selection to reality. The subject identifies reality by means of a combination of those categories, a combination which can be represented by a semiotic square. This identification is two-sided. On the one hand, the subject identifies something, and attaches it to the object. On the other hand, the object contributes qualities, which constitute the possibility of identification. The relation or correspondence between the qualities expressed in the exteroceptive semes and the perceptible qualities of the world makes it possible for subjects to assign content to objects by means of semes, to identify it and express it in elementary meaning

structures. This corresponding or isomorphic relation makes it possible for other subjects to understand this identification. So the iconic relation partly determines the communicability of meaning structures.

In the second stage of the articulation of meaning, the generation of semio-narrative structures, the iconic relation to reality is also present. As we have already said, the kernel semes of the sememes are realizations of the exteroceptive semic categories, for they correspond to the perceptible qualities of the objects. In all texts there are sequences of kernel semes or codes, like e.g. economic, physical, biological codes, which link the texts to reality. As far as the kernel semes and the semic codes are concerned, the paradigmatic organization of the narrative grammar is determined by an iconic relation to reality. The iconic basis of the syntagmatic organization is self-evident: the anthropomorphic completion of logical relations by means of actants and their actions is based on the iconic relations to people and their actions in the outer-semiotic world. Inspired by people's behaviour in reality, Greimas has constructed an isomorphic, anthropomorphic model. The starting-point for this model is the iconic relation between narratives and reality, and it functions on the basis of this iconic relation.

In the third and last stage of meaning generation, the discursive grammar, the iconic relation with reality is again of major importance. The enunciator dresses up the semio-narrative structures with figures and icons in the sense Greimas gives to the term, with specific times, places and characters, which enables the enunciatee to link meanings to a context. Even if the enunciator disconnects these times, places and characters from his own time, place and person through the procedures of disengagement, those elements still have to have shapes which are recognizable and identifiable to the enunciatee; otherwise they cannot be communicated. Moreover, the categories of time, place and character are of an exteroceptive kind. They refer directly to reality. This is even more the case with the procedures of engagement: figurativization and thematization. Figures and themes are chosen by the enunciator with a view to their recognizability by the enunciatee, so that he can link them to a familiar context. Thus the figures and themes are linked to reality through the communicative situation. This does not mean that the subject-enunciator does not work independently when providing discursive structures, but only that these structures are co-determined by the way in which they are intended to function in the communication. In order to be communicated to the enunciatee, the discursive structures have to be iconically related to contextual reality.

In the study of the iconic relation it has become clear how closely related object, sign and subject are to each other. Their identification in the fundamental grammar, the composition of the codes and the anthropomorphization in the narrative grammar, and the figurativization in

the discursive grammar, were realized by the enunciator on the basis of the iconic link to reality. It is on the basis of this link that they can be interpreted by the enunciatee and can function in communication. Apart from this iconic relation between reality and signification, one could also mention the indexical relation, which, however, is present to a much lesser extent in the generative process than the iconic relation. The indexical relation to reality is only present at the discursive level and it is completely dependent on the communicative context. The iconic relation in communication is based on an indirect link between meaning-structure and reality. In contrast, the indexical relation is based on a direct link; the enunciator constructs meanings which, from the enunciatee's point of view, refer to reality in a direct way. The deictic elements in texts, such as demonstrative pronouns, personal pronouns and proper names, function on an indexical basis: the enunciatee has to see them as signs which refer directly to reality in order to be able to interpret them.

In conclusion we may say that, even if we have restricted our remarks to meaning generation itself and its relation to reality, Greimas' semiotics as a theory has some iconic traits, like any thought-process according to Peirce. The principle which constitutes the possibility of meaning generation on different levels is that of conversion. Conversion expresses the equivalence between the different levels, but also the fact that a higher level is richer in meaning. Although all levels have the same content, it is only the higher level which adds something to this content. The permanence throughout and the isomorphy between the levels are the expression of their iconic relation. Greimas' semiotics is a search for these permanent and isomorphic qualities. His generative process is in fact a process of identification of this permanence and isomorphy: they cannot be identified in isolation, but only by means of generation.<sup>25</sup> This further clarifies the dual iconic character of Greimas' semiotics:

1. Greimas describes the articulation of meaning as a generative process, which is based on semic identification and conversion, that is to say on permanence and isomorphy. However, both the identification by means of exteroceptive semes and the conversion or extension by means of isomorphic or analogous semes, are partly based on iconic relations.
2. Greimas describes the generation of meaning as an autonomous transposition of the world into networks of meaning with their own paradigmatic and syntagmatic organizations. But this transposition is not quite autonomous, because as appears from the fundamental, narrative and discursive grammars, the paradigmatic and syntagmatic organizations are partly based on iconic relations.

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<sup>25</sup> Cf. H.Parret 1983b:86: "Levels of depth cannot be identified in se; one identifies their generation, their conversion one into the other (...)."

### 1.3.2 Semiosis and Communication

In the first section of this chapter we elaborated on Greimas' description of the subject's contribution to the process of the articulation of meaning. The meaning-giving subject autonomously transposes the world into networks of meaning; this transposition follows a generative trajectory based on identification and conversion. In the previous sub-section we described the object's contribution to the generative process of semiosis. The object influences the generation of meaning because it pressurizes and instigates semiosis, and because it is iconically and indexically related to the content form. After these analyses of the influence of both subject and object on signification, we will now turn to the sign as a mediator, which is the third constituent of semiosis as Peirce sees it. Of course we have already paid attention to the sign as content form in Greimas' description, and to its iconic and indexical qualities in Peirce's approach. Now, however, the sign will be approached as the mediator in semiosis.

Whereas Peirce in his semiotics grants a central position to the sign, Greimas is primarily concerned with the articulation of meaning that precedes it, i.e. the establishment of the content form. Greimas claims not to be concerned with the expression form or with the linking of expression form and content form in a sign. We can ask ourselves whether this is indeed the case. In his theory, discursive structures appear to function as sign systems with an expression form, rather than as logico-abstract content forms. The generation of discursive structures is co-determined by their functioning in a communicative situation: the enunciator executes procedures of disengagement and engagement, in order to produce a certain effect of meaning on the enunciatee. There are no logical forms functioning in communication, only signs: visible units of meaning, content forms linked to expression forms.

The process of meaning generation of the enunciator is explained by Greimas as a process of transposition: an identification, a construction and an elaboration by means of conversion on the part of the meaning producing subject. This is not fundamentally different from Peirce's conception of semiosis as interpretation. According to Peirce, the first stage in the interpretation is the assigning of predicates. This is actually the same as Greimas' assigning of identities by means of *semes* and *classemes* in *sememes*. The second stage of interpretation is conceived by Peirce as the linking of predicates and subjects in propositions. It corresponds to the linking up of *sememes* into *actants* and their actions in *semio-narrative* structures. The first stage of interpretation results in a paradigmatic organization, the second stage in a syntagmatic organization of the meanings assigned by the interpreting subject. It should be remembered that Peirce considers this interpretation as a process not only determined by the sub-



ject, but also by the object. According to Peirce, the third and last stage in an interpretation consists of the making of inferences: verifying, falsifying or concluding; in short: reasoning. This corresponds in part to Greimas' view on the construction of the discourse as an act of persuasion. Through the discursive structuring of the paradigmatically and syntagmatically ordered semio-narrative structures, a discourse is created which functions in a combined process of reasoning and persuasion. One should realize that Peirce stresses reasoning much more than Greimas. The making of inferences is, as Thirdness, the most important part of semiosis for Peirce. Greimas seems to see it as a final component or even as a complementary one.

The interpretative process of the enunciatee is closely connected to that of the enunciator. The very first stage of the interpretation by the enunciatee is the decoding of the discourse as it is offered by the enunciator: this is called the immediate interpretant by Peirce. On the one hand, this decoding is a linking of content forms to expression forms, on the other hand it is an identification of the paradigmatic and the syntagmatic structures in the discourse. In the next stage the enunciatee confronts the newly presented material with his earlier interpretations. He compares, reasons and makes inferences, and this may result in the incorporation of the new interpretation in his own tradition: Peirce's dynamic interpretant. In the third and final stage of interpretation the newly incorporated interpretation is transformed into a fixed interpretative habit. This is a really integrated interpretation, which entails consequences for the enunciatee's behaviour in the world, or for new interpretations; this is called the final interpretant by Peirce. In the final interpretant the interpretative process is related to reality. The dynamic object is the instigator and the driving force behind the generation of meaning of the interpretation by the enunciatee, it influences the content form of this generation and its communicative functioning. Moreover, it now appears that the dynamic object is influenced by the effect or interpretant of the interpretative and communication process of enunciator and enunciatee. This does not mean that the generative process of semiosis and communication should be seen as a closed circle, with the dynamic object as first and final point. It is more like a continuous line of interpretations which influence each other, a line with links to and from reality.

Now that the interpretative process of the enunciatee has been described somewhat more in detail, its effect on the interpretative process or meaning generation of the enunciator can be further specified. We can distinguish two stages in the enunciator's activities: signification, i.e. the generation of a content form, and enunciation, i.e. the presentation of that content form in communication. These two stages are not consecutive, but continually interactive. In the first stage, signification, the enunciator

establishes a structure of meaning or immediate object, by means of procedures of identification, construction and conversion, in short by means of transposition. According to Peirce this immediate object represents the dynamic object in a certain shape, it represents reality in a certain light. This is the first component of representation as Peirce sees it. The second stage, enunciation, presents an enunciator who is completely attuned to the inferences which the receiving subject, the enunciatee, will have to construct.

Following Parret (1983b:21,31) one can summarize the activities of the enunciator under the heading of "presentification": the enunciator outlines and presents the structure of meaning to the enunciatee in the communication. Parret (1983b:98-102) describes presentification as a strategy i.e. a set of actions performed by the enunciator, whilst looking to the enunciatee's inferences. By means of discourse the enunciator wants to prescribe a certain way of reasoning to the enunciatee. The enunciator does not create a discourse in order to describe something, "descriptibility", but in order to prescribe, "prescriptibility". Depending on his modal competence the enunciator tries to convince the enunciatee, tries to get him to reason in a certain way by means of the modal structure of the discourse. In contrast to Greimas' semiotics, which according to Parret (1983b:113-115) is based on paradigmatic rationality, on the elementary semantic structure elaborated by means of conversion, Parret argues in favour of semiotics based on syntagmatic rationality, on the construction of inferences. Hence he proposes to consider presentification as the basis for semiosis, and as the enunciator's most important semiotic activity in signification as well as in enunciation.

Parret's emphasis on the syntagmatic organization, inferences and enunciation can be described as an accentuation of Thirdness. In my opinion, this should, however, not lead to the neglect of Firstness and Secondness, which are also present in semiosis. As the concept of presentification pays little attention to the subject's structuring of content with its own qualities, independent of communication or to the relation to reality (Firstness and Secondness), I think it is preferable to stick to Peirce's concept of representation, which pre-eminently expresses all three sign-relations. This concept pays special attention to the mediating role of the sign: the representation of something to someone. However, I think it might be useful to continue to use the concept of presentification for the description of the enunciator's activities in communication. The concept of representation could then be used as a cover-term for all semiotic activities: it would cover both transposition, i.e. the activities of the enunciator resulting in signification, and presentification, i.e. the activities of the enunciator resulting in enunciation.

In this way Peirce provides the framework for Greimas' elaboration of the generation of meaning as the transposition of the world into networks of meaning. This homologation leads up to the conclusion that semiosis has to be considered as a generative process of representation containing the two inextricably linked processes of the transposition of meaning or signification and the communicative functioning or enunciation. The three basic components of this semiosis are the object, the subject and the sign which are the constituents of all aspects of both signification and enunciation.

## 2. A SEMIOTIC APPROACH TO NARRATIVE TEXTS

Elements of Peirce's and Greimas' semiotics can be related to each other, as we have demonstrated in the previous chapter. Based on this homology we will now concentrate on narrative texts. In the first part of this chapter (2.1) we will describe a semiotic theory or explanatory model of narrative texts, which although strongly inspired by the semiotic concepts of Greimas and Peirce, is the present author's own product. The first section of this part (2.1.1) will elaborate the explanatory model and in the second section (2.1.2) the individual characteristics will be made clear. Section 2.1.2 presents the final conclusion and is therefore the most important part; it contains the core of the semiotic theory presented in this book. The second part of this chapter (2.2) will deal with the consequences of this semiotic theory with reference to the analysis of narrative texts. It will contain a description of a method of analysis of narrative texts.

### 2.1 A Semiotic Explanatory Model

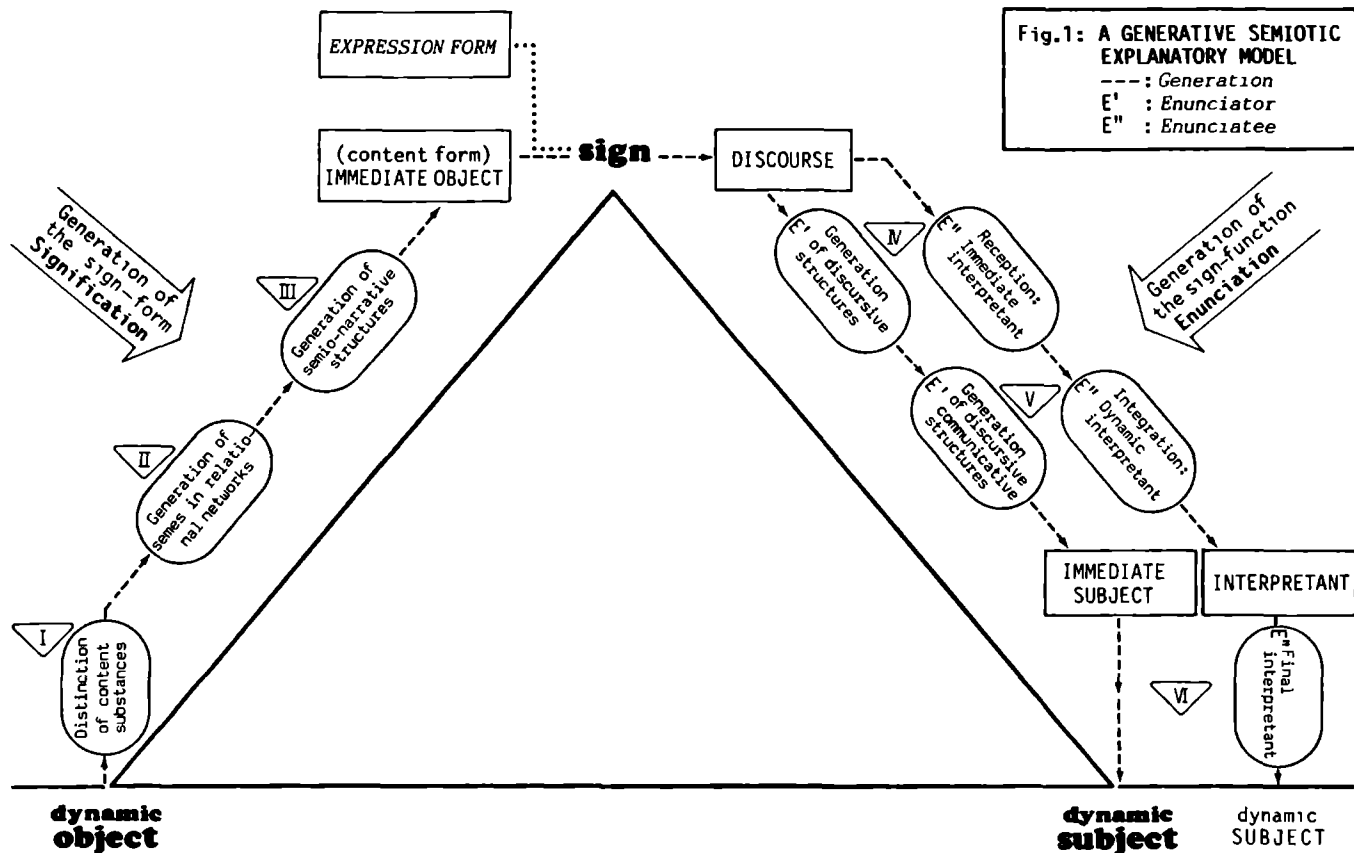
#### 2.1.1 A Description of the Model (see figure 1)

The basis for the generative semiotic theory presented here is the fact that human beings or dynamic subjects, i.e. people in the flesh, functioning within the world or dynamic object<sup>1</sup> know, think and signify by grasping objects in that world and by transposing them into signs and structures of meaning, while they always keep in mind the way in which these structures function in the communication with other human beings. In this process the sign occupies a central place: on the one hand it is the result of the transposition of objects into content forms, on the other hand it is the starting point for the functioning of meaning or content form in the communication. The sign is the unit which represents a certain aspect of reality, which articulates the aspect in a certain content, and which presents it to somebody. Seen in this way, semiosis may well be described as a process of a sign-in-action.<sup>2</sup> On the other hand it should be clear that the sign cannot act on its own, it has to be activated by a dynamic subject. The subject transposes objects into meaning and presents them in communication with other subjects. The following semiotic explanatory model is based on this view that knowing or thinking has to be considered as a process of attributing meaning to reality or as a constructive or generative process in which subject, object and sign are the constituents.

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<sup>1</sup> Dynamic subject and dynamic object are in a certain sense one continuum; they are distinguished from each other as far as the dynamic subject is the active giver of meaning, and the dynamic object is not.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Parret 1983b:30-32.



Within the process of generating meaning or semiosis two primary moments are to be distinguished. The first moment is the transposition of the dynamic object, i.e. the a priori given reality and culturalized reality, into meanings and structures of meaning. This transposition or transformation is called "signification". The second primary moment consists of making these structures of meaning function in a communicative process and is called "enunciation". In signification, elements of meaning or semes are attributed to observed differences in the world. The world is identified semantically and arranged in a syntactic order so that a first concept or idea of the world, the so-called immediate object or content form, is created. This content form or immediate object is the form in which a sign represents a particular aspect of reality. In enunciation this content form is linked with the expression form, creating a perceptible sign which can represent a content form and function within communication. The sign functions in the enunciation as a representamen or representant of a meaning attributed to the world, and evokes a meaning effect or interpretant on a person's stream of thoughts. Consequently the sign is characterized by two sides: the sign-form and the sign-function, and together they mediate as a sign between the subject and object in the process of the generation of meaning. The signification or sign-form-in-action and enunciation or sign-function-in-action are the two components of semiosis which logically can be distinguished but actually interact with each other.

Apart from the sign, both the object, because of its confronting power, impetus and influence, and the subject, because of its capacity to generate meaning, participate in semiosis. Living in reality and confronted by that reality a dynamic subject or subject of flesh and blood is made to think and to attribute meaning to a dynamic object through signs.<sup>3</sup> Signs are determined by culture, in so far as culture has laid down the rules for the combinations of the expression form and the content form, as well as by the dynamic subject and by the dynamic object. This means for the generation of a narrative text, that is to say a network of linguistic signs, that a dynamic subject or writer living in reality and confronted by that reality, is thinking and attributing meaning to a dynamic object through linguistic signs. This attribution of meaning is not only determined by the object, but mainly by the culture and linguistic convention and the

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<sup>3</sup> That is why in *figure 1* the arrows have been drawn from the basis "dynamic object - dynamic subject": it is from this basis that meaning is generated. Dynamic subject and dynamic object do not exist separately, although the *figure* may give this impression. As a real living creature the dynamic subject is part of the dynamic object; as a result of previous processes of semiosis this subject consists of a complex of interpretants. Consequently the generation of meaning starts from a dynamic subject, which is both part of a dynamic object and a sum of interpretants, in confrontation with a dynamic object.

creative arrangement of the writer himself, of his stream of interpretants resulting from previous experience of living, thinking, reading etc. Consequently, a narrative text as a network of signs is the result of a mediating process between the writer's stream of interpretants, the dynamic object and the culture. But there is still another aspect. The subject writes the narrative text by representing a part of reality in a particular aspect (this may be more or less fictional) with the aim of presenting it to another subject or reader and evoking a particular meaning effect or interpretant in that reader. His articulation of meaning, his shaping of the content (signification) is therefore dependent on the enunciation or intended communicative functioning of this content in a reader. Until now we only have been dealt with the general characteristics of the process of semiosis or meaning generation resulting in a narrative text, now we will describe it more in detail. The following description presumes continual consultation of *figure 1*.

Within the two primary moments of the generation of the narrative text, the signification and enunciation respectively, six stages may be distinguished. These stages are not autonomous, nor are they consecutive, but they continually interact with each other. They are logically distinct stages. We will describe them one after the other.

The first stage of semiosis (*figure 1*: I) consists of distinguishing content substances, which is culturally determined: every culture distinguishes certain substances within the amorphous continuum of reality. This is not to say that this and the following stages of generating meaning are not determined by the dynamic object. The content substances which culture distinguishes in reality are essentially determined by that very reality. That is why there are different cultures. The first stage in the process of generating meaning indicates the limits and possibilities within which an individual writer can construe meaning.

The world is in fact a reservoir of possible meanings and on the basis of these possibilities a writer generates networks of meaning. With the culturally determined possibilities, a meaning giving subject or writer transposes parts of the world into semic relations. This is the second stage of semiosis (*figure 1*: II). Generation of meaning is a process of increasingly precise identification, of transposing objects into increasingly accurate semic forms. In this stage of the identification the writer uses semes and semic relations which partly correspond to the sensory perceptible qualities of the world and partly are determined by the conceptual arrangement of the culture and linguistic convention. So it is clear that the dynamic object (parts or aspects of reality), the dynamic subject (writer) and culture and code are simultaneously present in this second stage of the generation of meaning. In the following stages the influence of these three constituents will become apparent.

In the third stage of semiosis (*figure 1: III*) the semic relations of stage II are taken up and placed in a process of narrative development. The classemes which are constituted by the general discursive context, and the kernel semes which are more concrete and which specify the text by iconic and symbolic relations with world and culture, are connected with each other to constitute sememes or words functioning in a text. The same kernel semes and classemes occur frequently in different words within a discourse and that is why they can form lines of meaning or isotopies. The advantage of this approach to the semantic generation of meaning is that justice can be done both to specific meanings, kernel semes, and to general meanings which depend upon the textual context, classemes. Not only the influence of the textual context and culture is acknowledged, but also the influence of reality on the text, context and culture. So we consider the content form or sememes within a discourse as complexes consisting of 1. kernel semes which function on the basis of symbolic and iconic relations with reality and which are the result of the influence of the dynamic object, the culture and the process of conceptualization, and of 2. classemes which function on the basis of symbolic relations with reality and which are the result of both the influence of the textual context and the process of conceptualization.

A second characteristic of stage III is the anthropomorphization of the elements and relations of meaning. In stage II the generation of meaning was still merely an abstract and strictly logic arrangement of values. Connecting these values with narrative actants, with functions of narrative actors, stage III extends this second stage. Following Greimas, six narrative actants can be distinguished: subject, object, destinator, destinee, adjuvant and opponent. In a text the relations between the narrative actants are continually changing. These changes may be described as a narrative process in which an acting subject plays a central part.

In this way it becomes clear to what extent in stage III the values and semic relations of stage II are taken over and extended by means of anthropomorphization and by giving them a place within a narrative network. The conversion procedure controls this transition and is therefore responsible for the isomorphy between stage II and III and the enrichment of stage III. The second stage of the generation of meaning results in semic networks which have external as well as internal references. The third phase results in semic networks or structures which are placed in a narrative context and in sentence and plot relations. In other words: stage II and III result in semio-narrative structures, that is to say structures of meaning which form the basis of any narrative text, i.e. in any text with a plot-development. This completes the first primary side of semiosis: signification.

Consequently the primary moment of semiosis, signification, consists



of three minor stages and describes the subject's (writer's) transposition of objects into fairly abstract networks or structures of meaning. It is characterized as a generative process constituted by the following three aspects: a. the culture, which provides the possibilities for the generation of meaning, b. the dynamic object, which provides the continuum of the substances and, moreover, exerts an influence on the articulation of the content form, and c. the dynamic subject (writer) which is the main perpetrator of the transposition of the content substances into the semic and narrative structures of a text. The result is the content form or immediate object or the sign as it is conceived, the form in which the text represents the dynamic object. The immediate object is only really active as a sign when it is linked to an expression form: as a connection between expression and content form the sign is functioning in linguistic utterances. As a conceptual structure which can be used to represent, the sign is a First; as a concrete utterance, a content form related to an expression form, it is a Second; and as a sign used by the subject to present the dynamic object in a certain light, to someone it is a Third. At this stage, the sign only functions as a First and a Second, and not yet as a Third: the actual mediation, i.e. the functioning of something as a sign for someone, has not been achieved yet. In order to actually achieve the communicative functioning of the sign as Third, the subject still has to perform a number of actions which constitute the second main stage of semiosis.

In order for the sign to function as a Third, the meaning production of the writer will explicitly start from the communicative situation in which the meaning structure will have to function. The writer now really becomes a subject-enunciator: he offers meaning in communication. By means of various procedures the subject-enunciator or writer presents the semio-narrative structures in communication so that they may bring about a meaning effect or interpretant in the subject-enunciatee or reader. The first procedure of enunciation and stage IV of the generation of meaning (see *figure 1:IV*) is the placing of the semio-narrative structures in a discourse. The still fairly general semic relations consisting of kernel semes and classemes and narrative arrangements are arranged in a discursive context. The writer does not present the meaning structures or semic values as such, but from the perception of an actor in the text and from the point of view of the narrator. By doing this he evokes a positive, negative or neutral assessment in the reader. The writer provides the semic values with names, concrete images and present the narrative actants as (possible) living actors. This means that if a discourse is to evoke a meaning effect or interpretant in the reader, this reader should be able to relate the points of view and focalization, the evaluations and concretizations to his own stream of interpretants, his own experience of world and life. The discursive presentation of the semio-narrative structures can only

work on the basis of iconic and indexical relations between the discourse and the dynamic object as they are established by the enunciator (writer) and as they are presented to the enunciatee (reader). In other words, the subject-enunciator presents the meaning-structure in a way he thinks the enunciatee can decode. This cannot be described as the generation of the referential illusion: without an iconic, or sometimes indexical relation to reality, the enunciatee simply cannot establish a link and cannot develop a positive or negative judgement.

The second procedure of the enunciation, stage V of the generation of meaning (see *figure 1: V*), aims even more explicitly at the communicative context of enunciator (writer) and enunciatee (reader). The reader reads a text not only as a nice story which can be understood because of iconic and symbolic relations, but also as a reference to an external reality or a conceived reality which relates in a certain way to that external reality. He (possibly) relates the text directly to the reality which he experiences in his life by means of indexical relations. In stage V the reader not only recognizes indexical links with his own situation, but this phase also aims at the interactive context of writer and reader. The writer places the discursive structures within a communicative action structure. He does not only want to pass on information, i.e. he does not only want to bring about recognition or knowledge in the reader, but he wants him to reason and to believe the discourse and then realize belief into action, behaviour or an interpretative habit.

Whereas the writer arranges the discursive structure of persuading and convincing, it is up to the reader to interpret the text, to make a network of meanings in interaction with the textual strategies. The writer offers discursive-communicative structures so that the reader can relate them to his own communicative context and his own stream of interpretants and integrate these structures in his experience of life. Only when this takes place will the generation of meaning by the writer result in a dynamic interpretant, an active meaning effect in the reader. For this active or dynamic interpretant to function, the reader should not only decode the discursive structures, but also supplement them, relate them to his own way of thinking and living.

This means that actually the enunciation consists of two generative processes: on the one hand there is the generation and presentification of meaning on the part of the subject-enunciator, on the other hand there is the subject-enunciatee's intended reaction. For a discourse to function properly in communication, the intended enunciatee should signify and reason in reaction to the paradigmatic and syntagmatic discursive organisations presented by the enunciator, in a way that corresponds to the context and the strategy of the presented discourse, but also in his own way, by confronting the presented discourse with his previous exist-

ing knowledge, reading experience and experience of life. The process of meaning generation or interpretation by the reader, with its distinct stages of immediate and dynamic interpretant which demonstrate his increasing influence, is indicated in the *figure* by a line which on the one hand parallels or corresponds to the enunciator's generative process, and on the other hand exists as a line on its own, as a product of the reader's own meaning generation in a dialectic relation with the narrative discourse presented.

Up to this moment we have only been considering stages IV and V of the enunciation. Stage VI, the final interpretant, builds on stage V but still has a place of its own in our model (see *figure 1: VI*). The final interpretant is the ultimate result of the enunciatee's interpretation: it is the new interpretative habit, the residue of the complete process of meaning generation and communication. This new habit may concern actions, behaviour or thinking habits, created by semiosis. *Figure 1* represents the final interpretant as a kind of transition from the semiotic to the non-semiotic level: as a residue of semiosis it influences everyday life, the actions and behaviour of the interpreting dynamic subject (reader of flesh and blood) and consequently also the dynamic object or reality in which the dynamic subject lives. The parallellism in the figure between stages I and VI is intentional. Stage I is the transition from the non-semiotic to the semiotic level; on the one hand we have the dynamic object which supplies substances (the continuum of substances), and on the other hand the semiotic aspect in the distinction of content substances. Stage VI is the transition from the semiotic to the non-semiotic level: it concerns the ultimate effect of semiosis on the behaviour in non-semiotic reality.

Summarizing, the second primary moment of the semiosis, the enunciation, is therefore determined by four constituents. The first constituent is the dynamic object. It provides the possibilities and qualities on the basis of which the discursive characters, actors, focalizations and names can function for the reader as images of the world. When the reader links the discourse with the dynamic object by means of iconic relations, an interpretant may come into being in him. Moreover, the dynamic object is the basis of the indexical relations the reader may recognize between the discourse and his own world. The dynamic object is indirectly present in the iconic relations, via the general pattern of signs, and directly in the indexical relations, via the specific communicative context. The second constituent of the enunciation is culture or the complex of the intersubjective semiotic rules and conventions that has determined the content substances and the expression form. In that way culture has established the limits and possibilities of semio-narrative and discursive-communicative structures. In the third place the enunciation is determined by the dynamic subject-enunciator or writer. It is the writer who activates the semiosis both by representing a dynamic object in a text under specific aspects,

that is to say by constituting an immediate object, and by presenting this immediate object in a communication to the reader, aiming at a sepecific meaning effect or interpretant in the reader. In other words the writer is only present in the text as an immediate subject and not as a dynamic subject. The fourth and last constituent of the enunciation is the dynamic subject-enunciatee or reader. The reader has an indirect influence on the communication and on the writer because the latter aims at a specific interpretant in the reader. Only that aspect of the reader is present in the text which is important to the generation of meaning by the writer and this aspect is perceptible as an interpretant, as the intended meaning-effect in the text. Therefore the reader is present in the discourse as the interpretant and not as the dynamic subject.

### **2.1.2 Signification in the Service of Enunciation**

The explanatory model presented here is characterized by a subject enunciator or writer who covers reality with a network of meaning with a view to its communicative functioning. In this way this network of meaning can be interpreted, i.e. decoded, absorbed and integrated, and realized in an interpretative habit or behaviour by a subject-enunciatee or reader. This model reveals that the signification or creation of a network of meaning is subservient to the enunciation or communicative function. In this section (2.1.2) the view that signification is in the service of enunciation will be worked out in detail.

The goal of the whole process of generating meaning is to start a process of reasoning, thinking and feeling in an enunciatee. The text or discourse is construed to bring about a meaning effect or interpretant in a reader. Consequently we talk of the strategic generation of a text: the construction of a network of meaning controlled by a strategy, that is to say a plan to bring about a meaning effect in the reader.

The writer's generation of the semio-narrative structures is controlled by an imperative strategy, by a plan in which the semantic and narrative limits are determined and which the reader has to follow. For in the strategic generation of the semantic structures the subject-enunciator identifies objects by means of semic networks. He transposes objects into semes or conceptual values and in this way gives shape to the various contents functioning within a text in a general semantic manner. In his interpretation the reader has to make use of these elements of meaning and their relations. For instance, he is not allowed to change a text about motorboats into one about princes and princesses. He has to acknowledge the various isotopies or lines of meaning in the text, based on the repetition of kernel semes or classemes, as possibilities for interpretation. In his interpretation of the narrative structures, too, the reader has to follow the actions

of the characters and development of a story. However, the interpretation of the reader is not only directed by the imperative semio-narrative strategies, it also demands the reader's personal contribution. In order to understand the narrative structure, the reader both has to supplement that which the narrative structure takes for granted and has to arrange the narrative lines in the text into a narrative network. So the reader has a certain freedom which, though not unlimited, is fairly wide. In order to interpret the semantic structures the reader not only attaches meaning to the linguistic signs by connecting them with the linguistic code, but also by relating these signs within the text both to each other and to his own knowledge and experience. That is to say by filling in the gaps in the text, by making logical and analogical inferences. The former are founded on logical relations within the linguistic convention, the latter are founded on the relations of similarity the reader distinguishes in the text and between the text and his own reading experience and experience of life.

The writer's generation of discursive-communicative strategies is partly imperative and partly non-imperative in nature: it presents limitations as well as freedom to the reader. By arranging the semantic and narrative data in one discourse, with points of view, focalizations, concrete images and names, the writer aims at evoking a particular interpretant in the reader. The reader in his turn not only follows these discursive elements, but also supplements and links them with his cognitive universe and his life. By recognizing relations of similarity or iconic relations between the focalizations or images presented in the text on the one hand and his own knowledge and experience, as embodied in the stream of interpretants, on the other, the reader fills in the gaps or ellipses in the text and so interprets the discourse. For example, to place a novel in the Napoleonic period is therefore a strategy of the writer intended to make the reader link the discourse with his knowledge of that particular historical period. The reader has to fill in the ellipses in a text either from his encyclopaedia, i.e. the whole of semiotic knowledge, or from his life and the world he lives in, i.e. the whole of non-semiotic knowledge. The generation of these structures by strategic procedures can only function on the basis of links made by the reader: symbolic and iconic links by which the reader connects the discourse with the language-code and with his stream of interpretants, and indexical links by means of which he connects the discourse with his own context of reality. In short: the strategic generation of discursive-communicative structure results in a number of semantically and syntactically determined factors and a large number of ellipses, which the reader will have to follow and fill in on the basis of reasoning or interpretation with the help of symbolic, iconic and indexical links.

From this strategic dimension of the generation of semio-narrative and discursive-communicative structures it appears that it is pragmatics which

is really the denominator of the whole process of generating semantic and syntactic networks of meaning. The strategic generation indicates on the one hand the possibilities and impossibilities and on the other hand gaps or ellipses. It provides conditions for the interpretation process by the subject-enunciatee or reader. The impression may have been created that it is possible to analyse first all the particulars and then all the ellipses in a discourse. It is, however, basically impossible to fill in all the ellipses in a discourse, for every sememe (word) can be determined by an indefinite number of modifiers. The word "child", for example, can be complemented by age, gender, colour of skin, length of hair, shape of nose etc.. The meaning effect evoked by a sememe in one reader differs from that evoked in another and will never be the same as the meaning the writer gives to the sememe. Perhaps it can even be formulated in this way: within the large complex of indefiniteness, i.e. ellipses and gaps, which a discourse essentially is, only a very limited number of particulars is generated. By interpreting semantic and syntactic structures in a pragmatic perspective, the reader can complement the possibilities and ellipses indicated into a network of meaning of his own and can adopt it as interpretant in a stream of interpretants of his own. The strategic generation provides the limits and possibilities of interpretation. These possibilities and limits together with his own semiotic universe and his experience of life form the conditions for the interpretation process of the reader.

This approach to semiosis or the process of generating meaning in which enunciation or communication is the central point is not self-evident. This appears from the semiotics as formulated by Greimas which his followers try to develop.<sup>4</sup> In his semiotics Greimas describes the particulars of the discourse but hardly pays attention to the ellipses and the reader's own contribution. Our emphasis on communication, on the strategic element in the generating process, on the specific influence of reality and on the reader's own contribution is therefore more in line with Peirce's semiotics.

By means of a number of differences between Greimas' semiotics and the model presented here, I should like to develop a few points by way of conclusion of this theoretical part. Greimas bases his semiotics on logical arrangements. At the deep level the first and decisive meaning forms are generated in abstract semes and arranged in a logical order. At the surface and discursive level these abstract semes are "dressed up" both anthropomorphically and figuratively. All levels are generated by means of logical rules and principles. The transition between the levels is called conversion by Greimas. However, the fact that this conversion is not exclusively determined by logical rules is hardly acknowledged by Greimas and even

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<sup>4</sup> See Dict. 1 and 2.

less by his followers. Neither is the significance of this conversion.<sup>5</sup> In my opinion the conversion of a lower to a higher level is not only a "dressing up" of a given semantic and syntactic arrangement but is in essence an extension with new meanings. Apart from continuity conversion also contains discontinuity. This combination of something new, discontinuity, related to something that already exists, continuity, is made possible by an iconic procedure: a procedure which establishes an equivalent link or analogy between that which is already articulated and a new semiotic and non-semiotic experience. Hence a discourse consists of logically arranged levels and analogical relations. It consists of structures of meaning which are based both on logical and on analogical arrangements. This combination of logic and analogy explains why apart from particulars there are also ellipses or possibilities for complementation and renewal in a discourse. That is why a text should not only be limited to its intersubjective (cultural) conventions, as implied by Greimas' semiotics, but should also be extended with an iconic and sometimes also an indexical basis.

From the perspective of communication or enunciation this implies that the interpretation of a discourse by the reader is not only characterized by a deductive reasoning, in which the reader follows the logical arrangements in the semio-narrative and discursive-communicative structures, but also by an abductive or hypothetical reasoning. This abductive reasoning is a creative contribution of the reader, based on the similarities or analogies the reader perceives between textual elements and their structures and one's own thought and life. It is a hypothetical reasoning by means of which ellipses in a text can be filled in. This reasoning has to be checked up against the textual elements, that is to say by means of inductive and deductive reasoning. Both logical and analogical thinking or induction, deduction and abduction make up the interpretation of a discourse. This interpretation follows both the particulars of a discourse and the filling of the ellipses in the reader's personal and creative way. In this way the reader himself creates a network of meaning, a semiotic universe which may function as a dynamic and final meaning-effect or interpretant.

From the above it may have become clear that the tendency which exists in the semiotics of Greimas and his followers to speak of "the instance of the enunciation", by which is meant that subject-enunciator or writer and subject-enunciatee or reader form together one and the same unit of

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<sup>5</sup> In his reaction to the criticism of C. Bremond that in Greimas' semiotics everything is already determined at the deep level, Greimas answered that the conversion between the levels implies enrichment. (See the interview with P. Stockinger in *Zeitschrift für Semiotik* 5 (1983) 265-278.) On the other hand it does not appear from his books that he follows this through consistently: the discursive level remains only a dressing up of the deep level. In Dict. vol.2 the term conversion has disappeared almost completely.

communication, is rejected here,<sup>6</sup> because this implies that the subject-enunciator and the subject-enunciatee influence each other in such a way that they constitute each other and ultimately become one.<sup>7</sup> In Greimas' approach the reader has only to complete the logical arrangements by means of deductive reasoning and consequently coincides with the logical meaning effect of the discourse. We prefer a distinction between writer and reader. The reader interprets the discourse not only by means of deductive but also by abductive and inductive reasoning, while he is in interaction with this very discourse. Although the reader's interpretation takes place in a communicative context with the writer, reader and writer do not coincide. This is represented in the explanatory model by means of two parallel lines indicating the two generations of meaning, which, although intended to be corresponding, are still autonomously realized by writer and reader respectively.

Nevertheless, some tolerance has recently been noticeable in the Greimas school with respect to the influence of communication on the generation of meaning.<sup>8</sup> Greimas himself first paid attention to the communicative process in *Du Sens II* and mainly described this on the basis of a new approach to the "modalities". In *Du Sens II* Greimas describes communication not only as a process in which truth and meaning are passed on, but also as a process of convincing and manipulating. By means of a text the reader is modalized, that is to say made competent so that he believes the text. On the basis of a contract of confidence the writer offers the reader a text which appears true or probable. Such a text does not contain truths or correspondences with the world but creates the meaning effect "truth". In order to achieve this effect it has to be a plausible text, a simulacrum which resembles the world and whose effect is a reference to the world. So reality is a meaning effect of a text. Greimas calls this a "referential illusion".

Even if this tolerance of communication and the modal competence were judged positively, the principle of Greimas' semiotics has remained unchanged. In his view the competence of the reader is dependent on the text only, because he is only modalized by the text. By believing in the simulacrum of the text the reader gets the same cognitive status and the same competence as the writer and hence the two coincide once again.

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<sup>6</sup> See Dict.2 under the lemma énonciation (p.75-77).

<sup>7</sup> In Greimas' semiotics the subject is defined by whether or not it is linked to an object. When writer and reader have the same object, c.q. the same information, they coincide as subjects.

<sup>8</sup> Although both in Dict. 1 and 2 the space devoted to the lemma communication is minimal. In Dict. 2 only four lines are devoted to it. However, there are in Dict. 2 three entries ("contrat axiologique" written by S.Alexandrescu; "interaction" and "sujet" by G. Latella) testifying to a larger openness to communication.

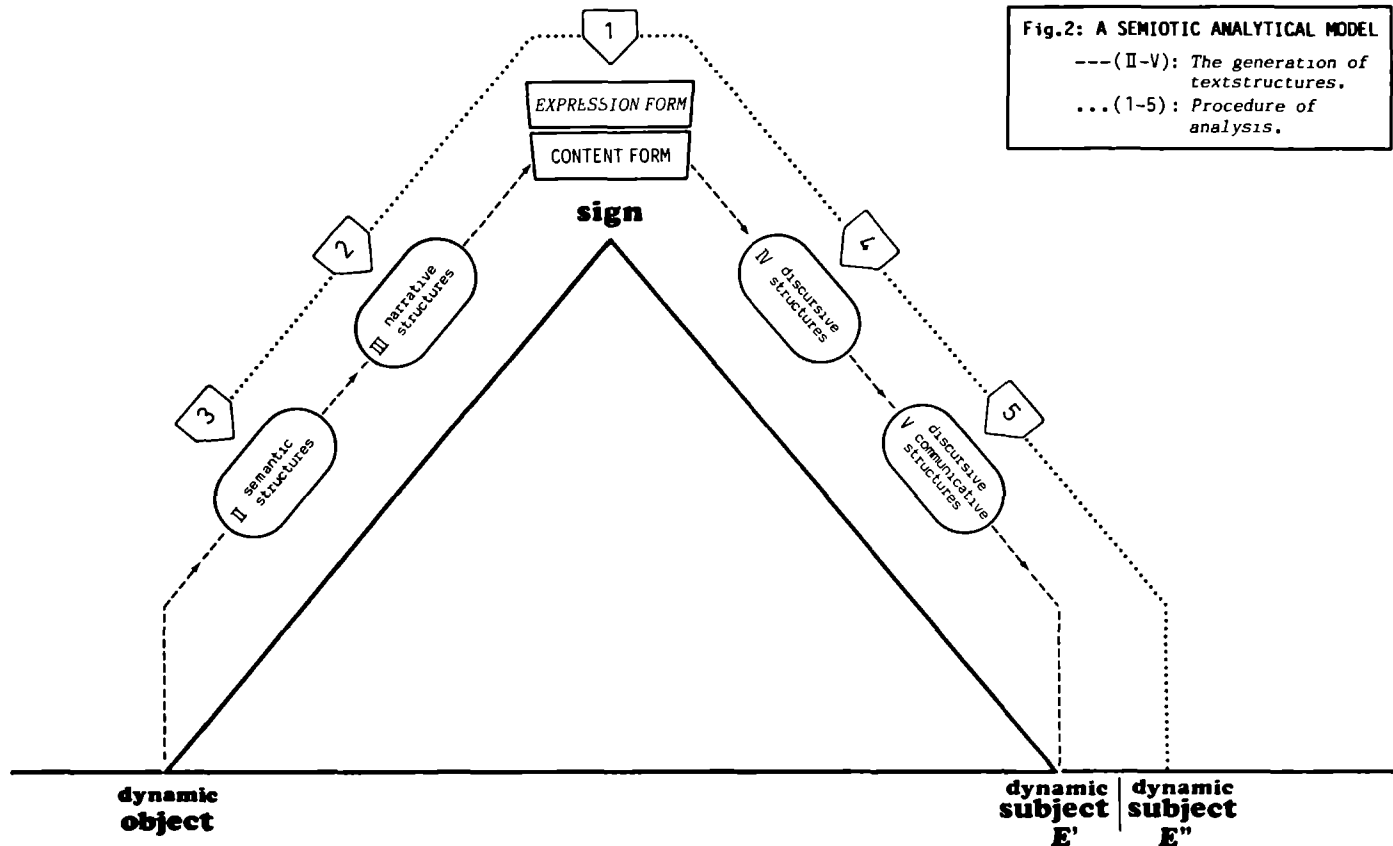


The enunciation continues to be determined completely by the enunciate or *énoncé*, which is the contents of a text. In our explanatory model it is the enunciation which determines the *énoncé*. In my opinion the reader can only believe a plausible text on the basis of a comparison with his personal world of experience and cognitive universe. The terms "simulacrum" and "reality as a meaning effect" are heavily dependent on the iconic relations and are based on the principle of analogy. Hitherto, however, this has not been acknowledged by Greimas. In his semiotics there is in fact a reversal: reality and iconicity are stated to be meaning effect whereas they are the basis of the generation of meaning.<sup>9</sup> In short: in Greimas' *Du Sens II* there is some tolerance of communication, but unfortunately there is no question of an actual turning to a semiotics in which the enunciation is the basis and the *énoncé* is included in the enunciation.

In the semiotic theory presented here, which is inspired by Greimas and Peirce, the writer's generation of meaning is seen as a process of signification and enunciation in which signification is in the service of enunciation, or even more strongly: signification is subordinated to enunciation. At the same time the reader's generation of meaning is seen as a process of semiosis, as a generation of semio-narrative and discursive-communicative networks of meaning in interaction with narrative, semantic, discursive and communicative textual strategies. These two processes of semiosis correspond to each other, but never coincide, as the writer and the reader never coincide.

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<sup>9</sup> Compare for example Dict. 2 the lemma's *figurativité*, *iconicité*, *réalité* and *réel*.



## **2.2 A Semiotic Analytical Model (see figure 2)**

A semiotic analysis reflects a normal reading process in which the reader enters into a relation with the text and attributes meaning to the text. On the other hand, however, it is unlike an average text reading because it is undertaken from the point of view of a conscious, in this case semiotic, approach to text and meaning, and with the aid of an explicit method, so that the various steps in the interaction process between text and reader are made clear and are explained and verifiable.

The semiotic method of analysis presented here takes as its starting-point that a reader and analyst depart in their interpretation from the external side of the text and gradually proceed in interacting with the more internal sides of the text. Starting with a general impression brought about by recurrent words, sounds and their rhythm, the reader will continue reading the plot or narrative development of the story and focus his attention on the meaning elements and their interrelation. It is a process of increasing identification of the text, that is to say of attributing more and more specific values or *semes* to the text. In this identification or generation of meaning the reader himself is present and influential and his attribution of meaning is partly determined by his own previous reading experience and experience of life. At the end of this generation process he will bring all aspects, the expression forms, the narrative and semantic lines together, and will arrange them in a single pattern, one overall interpretation of the text. In doing so he will pay attention to the way in which the writer presents the text to him as a discourse, as a unity. The network of meaning which the reader connects with the text as discourse is therefore the result of a process of interaction to which both the text and the reader have contributed.

There are five phases in the analysis corresponding with these steps in the interaction process between text and reader, preceded by a demarcation of the text, viz.

1. analysis of the expression forms
2. narrative analysis
3. semantic analysis
4. discursive analysis
5. communicative analysis

### **2.2.1 The Analysis of the Expression Forms**

The first thing which the text confronts the reader with, is its physical appearance or the immediately perceptible phonetic and alphabetic signs. These so-called expression forms guide the reader. They are points of reference and draw attention, attract or repulse. They see to it that the

reader perceives similarities and differences, continuity and discontinuity.

An analysis of the expression forms brings this preliminary strategic guiding of the reader to the surface. Such an analysis consists of a catalogue and an arrangement of textual elements as:

- a. phonetic and prosodic signals
- b. narrative signals
- c. syntactic signals
- d. semantic signals and
- e. discursive signals.

These textual elements draw the reader's attention either because of repetitions and similarities or by differences. An analysis of these expression forms can make clear how continuities and discontinuities function for the reader as immediately visible signs or signals, which refer to underlying structures of meaning.

### **2.2.2. The Narrative Analysis**

After a first orientation on the basis of the expression forms the reader is from then on guided by the narrative structure of the text. The generation of a narrative structure of a text is strategic, that is to say the construction of a narrative network is controlled by a strategy, a plan to bring about a certain meaning effect in the reader. The narrative structure or the arrangement of the elements of meaning in a story guides the reader in the process of interpretation of the text.

The method of analysis of the narrative structure in a text is mainly based on Greimas' narrative semiotics, only with the restriction that the narrative lines and arrangements are taken to be directives to the reader, who in response to them has to become active himself. Although Greimas does not actually acknowledge the role of the reader and looks upon narrative analysis as a textual affair which is not related to the reader and reality, it is nevertheless possible to extend narrative semiotics and to examine the narrative structure of a text as a narrative arrangement of elements of meaning which demand the reader to make choices and arrangements.

Another aspect of Peirce's semiotics is integrated in this Greimassian narrative analysis, for the following narrative analysis starts from the acknowledgement that the narrative structure and development in a text is to some degree iconically motivated by reality, insofar as the linearity of the actions and programmes is analogous to the sequence of events in reality. Because of these iconically motivated relations the reader is able to make narrative arrangements. How else does the reader know that it is necessary to have money as an adjuvant to buy a house, or to have a man and a woman to get a baby, or to acquire competence before performance is possible? Only because the reader presupposes that the order of actions

in the narrative text corresponds to the order of events in reality. The narrative analysis presented here presupposes an iconic relation between text and reality as the condition for the reader to understand the narrative development of the text.

A narrative analysis starts from the viewpoint that in a narrative text the elements of meaning are arranged in such a way that the reader can detect the development in the story: there is a beginning which gradually develops into ever-changing situations and which results in a conclusion. The transformation of the beginning into the end is brought about by the actions of characters which relate to each other in a certain way. The reader is supposed to follow this narrative transformation in his interpretation of the text. Consequently a narrative analysis should consist of three parts:

- a. determination of the beginning and the end situation of a text
- b. investigation of the actions of the various subject-actants
- c. explanation of how the actions of the various actants are connected.

These parts will be analysed by means of a number of analytical steps.

1. The first step is to investigate and define the beginning and end of a text and the transformation which takes place between those two points. This defining can be done by means of such concepts as: lack - lack liquidated; desired - taken.

2. The second step is to make an inventory of the acting characters in the story and their objects. The question is to establish which subject actants act in order to acquire certain objects of value, by which is meant values or contents which are desired by a subject.

3. Subsequently every subject actant has to be investigated separately, in respect of the following aspects.

3.1. Determination of the installation of the subject, that is establishing when the subject is first introduced in the text; for instance at his birth, when he is given a name or when he first appears.

3.2. Analysis of the narrative trajectory which the subject follows to acquire an object of value; in this analysis the following questions are answered:

3.2.1. How does the subject acquire the so-called modal objects /to have to/ and /to want to/? Modal objects are objects which, once they are acquired by the subject, make the subject competent or enable the subject to acquire an object of value.

3.2.2. Is there a connection between this acquisition and an assignment by a destinator or is there a prohibition by an anti-destinator? This question can also be formulated as follows: is there a contract between the subject and the destinator which makes the subject acquire the modalities or modal objects /to have to/ and /to want to/?

3.2.3. How does the subject acquire the modalities /to be able to/ and /to know how to/?

3.2.4. Do adjuvants or opponents play a role in this acquisition process? In other words does an adjuvant enable the subject to do something or does he provide the subject with specific information or means to acquire the object of value or does an opponent frustrate him in his efforts?

3.2.5. How does the subject acquire the object of value by means of these modal objects?

3.3. A summary of the narrative trajectory of the subject with respect to the acquisition of an object of value which contains three phases:

- a. a qualifying test or acquisition of the modal objects,
- b. a decisive test or acquisition of the object of value and
- c. a glorifying test or acknowledgement and appreciation which the subject gets for acquiring the object of value.

3.4. A representation of the narrative trajectory of the subject with respect to the various objects of value expressed in narrative programmes. These narrative programmes can be divided into three types: auxiliary programmes, narrative or autonomous programmes and main programmes. The investigation in 3.1-3.4 is concerned with the connections of the subject actant with objects or object actants.

4. As a fourth step of the narrative analysis the following connections between the narrative trajectory of one subject and the other actants, destinator, destinee, adjuvant and opponent, can be recognized.

4.1. The connection between subject and destinator and possibly anti-destinator. The acquisition of the modal objects /to have to/ and /to want to/ is an indication that possibly a contract exists between subject and destinator.

4.2. The connection between subject and adjuvant or opponent. The acquisition of the modal objects /to be able to/ and /to know how to/ may or may not be with the help of an adjuvant or in spite of an opponent.

5. The connections between the subject and objects (see 3) as well as the connections between the subject and the other actants (see 4) can be defined and represented by means of an actantial model.

Step 1-5 concentrate on the narrative trajectory of one subject.

6. What remains to be analysed as a sixth step is the connection between the various subjects occurring in a text and their conjunction and disjunction relations with an object. These relations form the trajectories or narrative lines of a text and they derive their identity from that which distinguishes them from the other lines (discontinuity) and from that which links them in the narrative structure (continuity). The final and essential characteristic of a narrative analysis is that the analyst chooses for a particular continuity on the basis of discontinuities. This is done by arranging the narrative lines in a hierarchical structure or network in which

one programme forms the main narrative programme and the others are subordinated to this main programme in various gradations. This arrangement can be made by means of the following questions.

6.1. Are there subjects who work together? And is it therefore possible to define the main programme of one subject as an auxiliary programme of an other subject?

6.2. Are there subjects who obstruct each other? And is it therefore possible to define some programmes as anti-programmes, and is it possible to define their subjects as anti-subjects and their destinators as anti-destinators?

6.3. Can the actantial relations between the various subjects be joined into one actantial model and so the connections between all the actants in a narrative text made clear?

6.4. Can the transformations or the narrative main programme, auxiliary programmes and anti-programmes, be joined together into one model, and the sequence in the narrative text made clear?

This last step (6) in the narrative analysis shows that the construction of a narrative network always demands self-activation and choices on the part of the reader, which leads to the conclusion that a narrative interpretation contains not only inductive (empirical) and deductive (logical) elements, but also abductive or hypothetical elements.

### **2.2.3. The Semantic Analysis**

Apart from the expression forms, which offer a first orientation to the reader and the narrative arrangement, which enables the reader to follow the structure and development of a story, it is possible to distinguish in a text a semantic structure, which ensures that the reader can attach definite meanings to the textual elements. This third strategy steers the reader to assign meaning and lines of meaning on the basis of connections and distinctions in the text. A text makes use of a cultural code which, within the cultural context in which it is valid, makes distinctions, arrangements or differentiations. The reader of a narrative text is confronted with the general distinctions by means of *classemes* which are repeated and in this way form the general context of the story. They form the general basis of the lines of meaning or isotopies of a text. These *classemes* function for the readers as signs or carriers of meaning, on the basis of what Peirce calls a symbolic, i.e. conventional, relation.

Apart from the *classemes* which form the basis for the general contextual meaning, the individual or specific meaning is determined by kernel *semes*. The numerous kernel *semes* in a text ensure the specific interpretation of the isotopies or lines of meaning. Through the connection of several

lines of meaning, which all consist of a general classemic basis and specific kernel semic contents, the text becomes a "texture" or textual fabric for the reader. If the classemic component of the lines of meaning function for the reader on the basis of symbolic relations, the kernel semic components are carriers of meaning on the basis of symbolic relations combined and extended with iconic, i.e. similar or corresponding, relations. The reader does not only attach meaning to the linguistic signs by connecting them to the linguistic code, but also by relating these signs within the text both to each other and to his own knowledge and experience. The individuality of a text, its uniqueness and identity, arises because elements of meaning are placed in new combinations, so that relations and structures of meaning come into being which previously did not exist. A reader can grasp the individuality of a text by means of logical inferences based on conventional and therefore already familiar relations (the symbolic aspect), and by means of analogical inferences which are founded on relations of similarity (the iconic aspect) and finally by means of logical inferences in which the analogical inferences are verified or falsified by comparing them with other textual elements and with the linguistic convention (the symbolic aspect). This interaction process between text and reader with its sequences of logical, analogical and logical inferences on the part of the reader in response to known and unknown combinations of textual elements, eventually leads to one coherent interpretation of the text. The logical aspects of this interaction process will be studied by means of a semantic method of analysis which is inspired by the semiotic theory and method of Greimas; the analogical aspects will be studied by means of a semantic method of analysis, which is inspired by the semiotic insights of Peirce.

### *1. The analysis of the logical aspects*

A first step in a semantic analysis is answering the question: what lines of meaning or isotopies are to be found in the text? Once the most important isotopies are distinguished the classemic and kernel semic contents of each isotopy will have to be analysed. To determine the logical aspects of these contents the analyst will ask the question how the textual elements within one and the same isotopy are related to each other, in what sense they are mutually inclusive or exclusive, whether they are linked or separate. Following Greimas, three types of relations can be distinguished, viz. the contradictory, the contrary and the complementary relations, but different from Greimas, these relations are considered to be the product of the interaction process between analyst and text. If the analyst attaches meaning to textual elements and considers them as terms which do not only differ but are mutually exclusive, he can describe the relation between them as contradictory. If the analyst perceives textual elements or values which are different from each other, but are mutually inclusive, he can call it a



contrary relation. That is to say, he arranges the elements of meaning as terms which are each others' opposites but which share a common "semantic axis" or basis of meaning. Finally, when the analyst assigns meaning to textual elements in such a way that the absence of the one meaning is the condition for the presence of the other meaning, then the analyst can call their relation a complementary or implication relation. By means of these three types of relations the analyst is able to demonstrate how textual elements are both related to and different from each other and how at the same time continuities and discontinuities may be described logically. The analyst is also able to show the correlation between the three types of relation by arranging them in one taxonomic structure and by making them visual in a semiotic square. He can represent the dynamic dimension by an arrow in the semiotic square.

## *2. Analysis of the analogical aspects*

An analyst should not only examine the symbolic or conventional relations but also the iconic or resemblant relations upon which the reader bases his analogical reasoning, i.e. his assignment of meaning to the text on the basis of analogies. By iconicity or analogy Peirce means either the similarity between two entities sharing one or several characteristics or qualities, or the similarity in the structure or arrangement of qualities. With reference to the semantic analysis of a narrative text a distinction has to be made between two types of analogy or iconicity. The first one is the analogy between the (arrangements of) linguistic signs and the reality, the second is the analogy between the linguistic signs or the arrangements of the linguistic signs in a text. The first type of iconicity, the so-called "iconicity by motivation", concerns (1) the correspondence between the syntagmatic development or linear sequences of semantic contents in a narrative text on the one hand and the linearity of events as evolving in time and reality on the other; and (2) the correspondence between the paradigmatic values selected by the text and aspects of reality. The semantic analysis presented here will not work out this iconic analogy but considers it as a general condition without which it is not possible to assign a meanings and a semantic development to a text.

The second type of iconicity will be analysed more in detail. This is the analogy a reader perceives between linguistic signs and structures of linguistic signs in the text, which give him the possibility to interpret this similarity as an icon or representant of a certain contents. The reader observes a certain similarity between the expression forms in the text and he connects these with a certain content form or meaning. Various kinds of analogies can be distinguished on the basis of which the reader may assign meaning. The most frequently occurring forms of iconicity and iconic signs in a text are:

- a. iconicity at the phonological level - the phonetic icon: the similarity between phonemes can function as a sign referring to a certain content for the reader; in other words the reader may look upon expression forms or phonemes, as representing a certain content or meaning;
- b. iconicity at the morphological level - the morphemic icon: the similarity between morphemes, such as grammatical endings and prepositions, may function for the reader as referring to a certain content;
- c. iconicity at the sememic level - the sememic icon: the similarity between sememes, i.e. words and stems which occur in the text, can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content;
- d. iconicity at the syntactical level - the syntactic icon: a similarity in the syntactic structure of sentences and in the syntactic positions of words in a sentence, or on the other hand a striking fact in a syntactic structure, can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content;
- e. iconicity at the textual level - the textual icon: a similarity in the stylistic textual structure of recurring sentences or parts of the text can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content.

This approach shows that a text is not only a conventional unity, but also a potential one, i.e. a collection of possibilities. It shows that it is up to the reader to transfer these possibilities of the text into meaning by exploiting the iconic qualities of the text for his analogical interpretation. In this sense the Peircean approach complements Greimas' approach which is based on symbolic sign relations. By defining the icons, the analyst is able to recognize and make explicit similarities which form the basis of the process of giving meaning. By analysing the phonetic, morphemic, sememic, syntactic and textual iconic qualities the analyst can account for his interpretations and make them verifiable to others.

Let us resume the semantical aspects in a number of analytical steps.

1. The first question one should ask in a semantic analysis is: what is the text all about, or, which lines of meaning are the most important in the text? An inventory should be made of the many lines of meaning or isotopies in the text, which ought to be as complete as possible. Each isotopy will be studied separately, while the analysis of each isotopy consists of two parts: an analysis of the general classemic basis of the isotopy and an analysis of the specific kernel semic contents of the isotopy.
2. A study should be made of the general classemic basis of an isotopy. This can be done
  - 2.1 by looking at the semes which occur in the isotopy and form the contextual basis of it;
  - 2.2 by looking at the relations of these contextual semes and by representing them in a semiotic square.
3. A study should be made of the specific kernel semic contents of an isotopy. The analyst has to

- 3.1 study the symbolic or conventional aspects of the sign relations by making logical arrangements,
- 3.2 formulate abductions or hypotheses concerning the iconic possibilities or resembling relations in the text; so he has to make analogical arrangements, while making use of the
  - 3.2.1 phonetic icons
  - 3.2.2 morphemic icons
  - 3.2.3 sememic icons
  - 3.2.4 syntactic icons
  - 3.2.5 textual icons,
- 3.3 check the abductions and analogical arrangements against other textual elements, that is to say to verify or falsify his abductions by inductions and deductions, by logical reasoning,
- 3.4 draw a conclusion based on abduction, induction and deduction, i.e. on the continual interacting of logical and analogical reasonings, and
- 3.5 represent the result of his reasoning in a semiotic square.
4. Attention should be paid to the development in the semantic contents in the text. The text does not only have a narrative development but also a semantic one. The semantic contents of an isotopy is not static, but develops, and this development may be represented by a taxonomic arrow in a semiotic square.

In actual practice it is not possible to investigate all the meaning elements in their symbolic and iconic relations. Hence every semantic analysis is incomplete. In an abductive way of reasoning any interpreter or analyst chooses from and defines the lines of meaning and arranges them in main and subsidiary lines. The purpose of this discernment of phases in the analysis is to ensure that the analysis is as reliable and explicit as possible.

#### **2.2.4. The Discursive Analysis**

In the discursive analysis the fourth phase in the interaction process between the text and the reader will be discussed. This entails investigation of the way the text guides the reader by means of discursive designs and how the reader assigns new meaning to the previously formed semio-narrative network. In this phase the reader's influence on the process of giving meaning is even greater than in the three preceding phases. In the discursive analysis various phases can be distinguished.

The first phase of the discursive analysis refers to the narrational perspective which the narrator holds up to the reader and by means of which he guides the reader. The narrator is the authority which is directly or indirectly present in the text and which presents the story to the reader from a certain perspective. This narrational perspective can be that of the

omniscient narrator who is not present in the text as such, or that of a narrator who is explicitly present in the text. The narrational perspective should be distinguished from the perspective of observation or "focalization". The former is the point of view from which the events are told and the latter is the point of view from which the events are observed. These two perspectives, which are present in the text, guide the reader in his positive, negative or neutral appreciation of the contents. Whereas the semantic analysis deals with the process by which the reader, interacting with the text, assigns values and arranges them in a structure of values, the first phase of the discursive analysis deals with the process by which the reader, interacting with the text, assesses it and arranges it in one general evaluation.

The second phase of the discursive analysis refers to the links made by the reader between the various lines of meaning in the text. On the basis of analogies the reader links the different relations in a text. For this purpose the reader makes abductions concerning the correlation between the lines of meaning: he checks this correlation by means of inductive reasoning, that is to say by verifying it via the textual elements; finally he formulates conclusions by means of deductive reasoning. This process of interpretation via abductions, inductions and deductions results in a discursive network which the reader places over, or connects with, the whole discourse. Although this discursive network is produced in interaction with the text, the reader's influence is considerable because of the dominant abductive moments present in this activity.

The third and last phase of the discursive analysis concerns the fact that the discourse comes to function not only as something which the reader gives identity to, but also as something by means of which the reader gives identity to himself. The reader identifies himself through the text. So the reader is not only active in the attribution of values and assessment, he feels that he is himself involved in the text. The interpretation or attribution of meaning to the text does not occur independently of the reader, but it has an effect on him.

In this final phase of the analysis it is necessary to focus on the index or indexicality. The intended reader of a text follows the linguistic code and he makes the linguistic elements function as symbolic signs. He is creative in his approach to the text, fills in gaps and makes the linguistic signs function as iconic signs. But he also establishes a relation between the text and reality as he knows it and so makes the linguistic signs function as indexical signs. In this last phase the reader connects the discursive network which he has placed over the text with himself or with certain other individuals. Just as the semantic analysis refers to the identification, the attribution of values or meanings to textual elements, this part of the discursive analysis refers to the individuation, the connection of meaning

with (extra-linguistic) individuals. In this last phase of the discursive analysis the reader's role is clearly decisive: he establishes the relation between the discourse and himself, his life and reality as he knows it.

In short, discursive analysis consists of five steps.

1. In the discourse the semio-narrative structures are presented to the reader from different viewpoints. These can be studied via questions such as the following.

1.1 Is something narrated from the specific perspective of a neutral or absent narrator?

1.2 Is something narrated from the specific perspective of a narrator who is himself present in the text but who is placed outside the development of the text?

1.3 Is something narrated from the specific perspective of a character or actor? How do these actors perceive the events or values and how does the narrator present these perspectives of observation?

1.4 What is the relation of a perspective of observation of one actor in relation to that of the other actors?

1.5 How do the points of views, i.e. the perspectives of narration and observation, evoke a certain positive, negative or neutral assessment in the reader?

1.6 What are the relations between the different points of view of the narrator and the points of focalization of the actors? In other words how can the reader arrange these discursive strategies into one hierarchical structure?

2. Are there repetitions of sentences and parts of the story by which the reader accepts the semantic values in the text more easily or naturally?

3. Is it possible to arrange the discursive analogies into a single discursive network?

4. What are the indexical relations which the intended reader may lay to identify himself by interpreting the text?

### **2.2.5. The Communicative Analysis**

Communicative analysis concerns the phases in the interaction process between text and reader which involve both the intertextual and extratextual relations. The intertextual phase concerns the network of meaning which is created when the reader assigns meaning to the text by relating the relevant text to other texts. The extratextual phase concerns the network of meaning which comes into being when the reader gives meaning to the text by referring to a certain historical context, a certain writer or reader. The extratextual phase can also concern the relation which the reader es-

establishes between the network of meaning he has already placed over the text, and the behaviour which results from it.

The intertextual and extratextual assignments of meaning by the reader to a narrative text are based on iconic and indexical relations. The reader arrives at an intertextual interpretation of the text when he attributes meaning to similar qualities, similar arrangements of contents or similar focalizations, in short to similar relations between this text and other texts. Apart from this iconic basis, there is also an indexical basis. The reader is able to understand an indexical intertextual relation, when the text referred to is physically near or present. For example, when a text A in a book refers to a text B in the same book in the sentence "as you read in the next text of this book", spatial nearness is a necessary condition for the reader to make the intertextual relation. Another example: a reader can understand an index in a book which refers to the texts and the pages in the same book, if and only if these texts are really present.

The reader arrives at an extratextual interpretation of the text when he attributes meaning to the qualities, arrangements or aspects in the text which have their meaning on behalf of their similarity to qualities, arrangements or aspects existing in the extratextual context. The indexical relations are even more important for the extratextual interpretation of a text than the iconic relations. The reader is able to understand textual elements or structures as referring to aspects of (experienced) reality, when he takes into account the situational embeddedness of the text. Let us cite Ehlich, who studied some indexical aspects in Hebrew.<sup>10</sup> "Deixis" (as the indexical aspect of language normally is called) "cannot be understood if analyzed in terms of properties of expressions. Rather, we have to consider the functions of deictic expressions in the process of communication. Deixis is something that a speaker *does* in order that he be understood by a hearer. This is only possible if the latter is able to reconstruct the reference of the respective deictic expression. Hence, deixis is to be conceived of as a *procedure* rather than a structural property of types of expressions." (Coulmas: 523). Consequently, the analyst should investigate the extratextual references of a text as elements of a procedure of a (historical) communication between writer and (intended) reader. This analysis can be made by means of the following steps.

1. The first step of the analysis is a short historical setting of a text in the communication situation of writer and reader.

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<sup>10</sup> K. Ehlich, *Verwendungen der Deixis beim sprachlichen Handeln: Linguistisch-philologische Untersuchungen zum hebräischen deiktischen System*. Frankfurt, Bern, Las Vegas, 1979. The quotation here is from the review of F. Coulmas in *Journal of Pragmatics* 4(1980) 518-524, which provides English translations of parts of this German book.

2. A study should be made of the relation between the historical context of the writer or the time sphere from which he is telling the story (time in the enunciation) and the time sphere of the story itself (narrative time).
3. An analysis should be made of the extratextual arrangements, that is to say of the indexical links of the text in relation with the (intended) reader or of the procedure by which this reader relates elements of the text with his experienced communicative situation. These deictic or referential links can be analysed by means of : personal pronouns, proper names, demonstrative pronouns and place and time indications. So we are here dealing with the elements of the text which the intended reading public can link directly with the communicative context, the historical setting to which the text refers.
4. An intertextual analysis should be made. This consists of an interpretation of the relations with other texts which the text refers to and with which the reader is supposed to make iconic links. The intended reader perceives possible iconic links between this text and other texts and uses these as the basis for his intertextual interpretation. The analyst makes these possible iconic intertextual relations visual and explicit.
5. An analysis should be made of the intended function of the text in interaction with the reader. This analysis is possible by answering the following questions.
  - 5.1. Is the textual unit intended to be ironical, cynical or sceptical?
  - 5.2. Does a textual unit exist within a particular social code, for example a legal or liturgical code? If so, it is intended to function in a specific way within the interaction between writer and reader.
  - 5.3. Is the aim of the textual unit a specific act or behaviour of the reader and is that the reason why it is arranged within a certain structure of persuasion or manipulation?
6. A combination should be made of the extratextual, intertextual and communicative interactive relations of the text which result in the arrangement into one communicative network.

With this communicative analysis we can conclude our semiotic analytical model. By means of this model the interpretation of a text can be analysed as a process of interaction between text and reader resulting in networks of meaning.

## **PART II: ANALYSIS**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **TO THE ANALYSIS OF GEN 2-3**

Reading is like visiting an unknown city. A visitor walks through an unknown city and looks around her. She registers various impressions, such as the uniformity in the architectural style, the road structure, the colours of the houses and the character of the city squares. After a first general acquaintance with the city she becomes touched by its beauty and is motivated to take a closer look at it. So she decides to undertake a more thorough exploration of the streets, squares and parks. She gets on a bus, takes a taxi or the underground, and gradually tries to form a map of the city. She does this by asking herself questions such as: which road is a main road, and where does it lead to; how do the side streets relate to each other; which streets form one particular area of town and where does that area end and the next one begin; where is the heart of the city? In other words, the visitor makes a mental arrangement of the city both by means of what she sees, as well as by means of her own prior knowledge of the functions and planning of cities. She arranges the city in this manner, and creates a mental map or structure which she places as it were over the city. After this initial general survey the visitor can continue and proceed to a study of the separate components which determine that city: the public buildings and museums, the churches and monuments, the houses and shops, the parks and fountains, the character of the streets and the life style of the people living in the city. This is the most extensive, time-consuming and labour-intensive part of her visit. The study of each separate aspect takes up days or even weeks. The visitor's own knowledge and interests are partly decisive for the aspects she prefers and for the period of time spent on them. And as she begins to be more and more fascinated by a particular aspect, she will also devote more time to it and let it play a larger part in her opinion and estimation of the city. During this protracted and intensive visit to the numerous aspects which make a



city a city, her impressions and knowledge are gradually merged into an overall picture, in which city plan, building, roads and parks, people's life styles are united and form a single kaleidoscopic and multi-faceted picture. That overall picture is dependent on the aspects considered and examined, and may be elaborated and adjusted by separate, specialist studies. The image which the visitor retains of the city at the end of her visit is an overall network to which both the city and she have contributed. Finally, she takes this image with her when she continues her journey. It can leave a permanent impression in her mind, and occasionally it may even influence her opinions and way of life.

The reading process takes place in a similar manner. The reader enters into a relation with the text, just as the visitor enters into a relation with the city. The reader's first impression of the text is brought about by recurrent words, by the sounds, the words and their rhythm. This expression form or surface of the text can stimulate the reader to continue reading and to get a grip on the text. She will then distinguish main and subsidiary narrative lines in the text and arrange them into a coherent pattern. In this way she forms a narrative structure and connects it with the text, a procedure which can be compared to the map which the visitor makes of the city. The next phase is the major part and the core of any reading of a text: the attention is focused solely on the textual elements and their interrelation, but the scope of the text is so wide that the reader can never throw light on everything, let alone hope to have exhausted the text. She is always forced to make choices. What is more, the reader herself is active in the reading of the text and her response is informed by her own previous reading experience and experience of life. By thoroughly considering as many aspects as possible the reader can attribute and order meanings, so that eventually she can link semantic lines with the text. Finally she brings all aspects, the expression forms, the narrative and semantic lines together, and arranges them in a single pattern, one overall interpretation of the text. In doing so she will pay attention to the way in which the writer presents the text to her as a discourse, as a unity. The network of meaning which she connects with the text as discourse is therefore the result of a process of interaction to which both the text and she have contributed.

This reading process, this process of interaction between text and reader, is central in the analysis of Genesis 2-3 which is about to follow. From now on we shall refer to the reader as he, in order not to attach too much importance to the reader's gender; both he and she, male and female readers are implied. This semiotic analysis of Gen 2-3 is on the one hand a normal reading process in which the reader enters into a relation with the text and attributes meaning to the text, but on the other hand it is unlike an average text reading because it is undertaken from the point of view of

a conscious, in this case semiotic, approach to text and meaning, and with the aid of an explicit method, so that the various steps in the interaction process between text and reader are made clear and are explained and verifiable. That is why a distinction has to be made between a normal reading and an analysis of the text, and between a reader and an analyst.

The method of analysis presented here is inspired by the semiotic views of Charles Sanders Peirce and Algirdas Julien Greimas, homologated and operationalized by the present author. This method consists of five phases corresponding with the steps in the interaction process between text and reader, preceded by a demarcation of the text, viz.

1. analysis of the expression forms
2. narrative analysis
3. semantic analysis
4. discursive analysis
5. communicative analysis

The first four phases of the analysis concern the intratext, the intratextual interaction process between Gen 2-3 and reader, while the fifth and last phase is also intertextual and extratextual in nature. The communicative analysis examines the connections which the reader makes between Gen 2-3 and other texts (intertextual) and between Gen 2-3 and the extratextual world. This analysis of Gen 2-3 is confined to the intratextual phase of the interaction process between text and reader. Although the basis of our analysis is the Hebrew text of Gen 2-3, the reader does not require any knowledge of Hebrew for the purpose of this analysis. A transcriptional system has been adopted which is intelligible to readers who have no knowledge of Hebrew.<sup>1</sup> An English translation of the Hebrew text of Gen 2-3 is added as an appendix to this book. The translation is partly based on the translation of the Jewish Publication Society of America (part 1: Tora, ed. 1982) and partly proceeds from the analysis.

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<sup>1</sup> An elaborate transcription of the Masoretic Hebrew, including vowels and accents, has been rejected because the consonants alone will suffice for a Hebraist, while a non-Hebraist is unable to read such a transcription. The choice made was to transcribe the Hebrew into (Latin) consonants and vowels, in which neither the *matres lectiones*, i.e. the consonant signs with the function of vowels, nor the length of the vowels, nor the *aleph* (in view of the fact that the *aleph* functions as a *mater lectionis* or as a consonant which is not realized in English) and the *ayin* (because it functions as a consonant which is not realized in English) have been indicated. A *h* is pronounced as the *ch* in Lochness and corresponds to the Hebrew *het*; a *š* is pronounced as *sh* and corresponds to the Hebrew *šin*. A hyphen is placed between two letters where it is necessary to indicate where the article *ha-* and the prefixes *le-*, *be-*, *ke-*, and *we-* end and the substantive begins. An apostrophe is placed between two vowels to facilitate the correct pronunciation; *be'ene* for example indicates that this word should not be pronounced as "bene", but as "be-ene".

### 3. DEMARCATION

To make an analysis of Gen 2-3 it is necessary to demarcate this textual unit carefully from the surrounding texts Gen 1 and Gen 4. This demarcation can partly be done on general grounds of content such as differences in characters and themes and partly on the basis of more specific differences.

#### 3.1 The demarcation of Gen 2-3 with respect to Gen 1

Gen 1 and Gen 2-3 differ in the first place from each other because in Gen 1 God is the only acting agent, whereas in Gen 2-3 there are several acting characters, including man, woman and serpent. A second point is the difference in the name of the character God which occurs in both: *elohim* in Gen 1 and *yhwh elohim* in Gen 2-3. A third point is that Gen 1 departs from the whole, the cosmos or heaven, and from there as it were descends to earth. On the other hand Gen 2-3 does not start from the cosmos but on earth: from the first to the last verse all attention is directed to the earth. The unique link between earth and heaven *erets we-šamayim* (2:4b) in which the earth takes pride of place, functions as a sign for the reader that the earth, as far as contents is concerned, comes first. A fourth general difference is the role of man. In Gen 1 man is a small part within the larger whole; in Gen 2-3 man on earth is the main theme. Finally, after Zacklad it can be concluded that the subject of Gen 1 is the installation of living beings or areas, whereas Gen 2-3 relates more to the relation between those living creatures.<sup>2</sup>

At first sight there seem to be several possibilities for the precise demarcation of the beginning of Gen 2-3. However, the story of Gen 2-3 cannot begin with verse 1, 2 or 3, because these verses are too closely linked to the preceding text, as the seventh day forms a whole with the first six days. In determining the beginning of the textual unit Gen 2-3 the question is really whether it begins with verse 2:4a or 2:4b. Most exegetes opt for 2:4b as the beginning, but Jacob (1934) and Cassuto (1944, 1961) argue in favour of 2:4a. Their respective translations of 2:4 are: "These are the toledot / this is the history of heaven and earth after they were created, after YHWH God had created earth and heaven" and "This is the history of the heavens and the earth, when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens."

There are a number of arguments against this demarcation. First, the demonstrative *elle* can be used anaphorically and cataphorically so that the reader might interpret it as pointing forward to Gen 2 or as

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<sup>2</sup> See Zacklad 1971: 1-30.

By areas he means: light dark, celestial bodies – earth, water – dry areas, etc.

summarizing Gen 1. However, the phrase "This is the history of heaven and earth" cannot as a kind of title point forward to Gen 2, because Gen 2 does not deal with the history of heaven and earth, but is only about the history of the earth.<sup>3</sup> Second, "the day/time when" *be-yom* is a time adverbial which indicates a beginning<sup>4</sup> and is followed by a description of that initial period.<sup>5</sup> Third, when 2:4a and 2:4b form a unity and when "this is the history of the heaven and the earth" *elle toledot haššamayim we-ha-arets* refers back to Gen 1, Gen 2:4b cannot but refer to Gen 1. But the name of God which throughout the whole of Gen 1 was consistently *elohim* has now become *yhwh elohim*. His creating, which until now has been mainly called *bara*, is now referred to by *asa* (to make). Neither is the order earth and heaven *erets we-šamayim* the usual one in Gen 1. In short, it is highly unlikely that 2:4a and 2:4b go together and as such form the beginning of Gen 2-3. "This is the history" *elle toledot* in 2:4a explicitly refers back to Gen 1. The contents of 2:4b indicate a new beginning, a new situation which is described in 2:5 and 2:6.

The textual unit Gen 2-3 begins, therefore, with 2:4b. There are a number of points arguing in favour of this view. In the first place, 2:4a forms a conclusion of Gen 1, which is very likely because together with Gen 1:1 it forms an inclusio. Secondly, in this way "in the time when" *be-yom* will mark the beginning of a new episode. The subclause introducing *be-yom* is followed by the main clauses of 2:5 and 2:6 which describe that new situation. In the third and last place the terms *yhwh elohim* and to make *asa* as well as the order earth - heaven (*erets we-šamayim*) show the differences with Gen 1 and they make it clear that a new textual unit is implied here. In this new textual unit the earth, within the whole of heaven and earth takes up a central position.

### 3.2 Demarcation of Gen 2-3 with respect to Gen 4

Generally speaking there are three points of difference between Gen 2:4b-3:24 and Gen 4. The characters Cain and Abel occurring in Gen 4 are entirely absent in Gen 2-3. A second point is that the theme of brotherhood or the relation between men, which in Gen 4 takes up a prominent place, is absent in Gen 2-3. Only the specific relation between man and

<sup>3</sup> Jacob (1934:71-72) and Cassuto (1961:97-99) are both rather ambiguous in their approach. On the one hand they argue that "these/this" points forward and that 2:4 as a whole forms the title of Gen 2-3. On the other hand they believe that the contents of 2:4a refers back to Gen 1.

<sup>4</sup> Jacob incorrectly translates "after". However "after" does not indicate a starting-point in time but a continuation.

<sup>5</sup> See Westermann 1974: 270-271.

woman is discussed in Gen 2-3. A third difference is that Gen 2-3 is situated in the garden of Eden, while Gen 4 takes place outside the garden.

It is much simpler to make a more precise demarcation of the end of Gen 2-3 than of the beginning, for in 4:1 a new character, Cain, is introduced directly. Another striking difference is God's name: *yhwh*. Again this may be interpreted as an iconic sign. In Gen 1 the same character is called *elohim*, in Gen 2-3 *yhwh elohim* and in Gen 4 *yhwh*.

The conclusion is that the textual unit to be analysed is:  
Gen 2:4b-3:24.

## 4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE EXPRESSION FORMS

The first thing which the text confronts the reader with is its physical appearance or the immediately perceptible phonetic and alphabetic signs. These so-called expression forms guide the reader. They are points of reference and draw attention, attract or repulse. They see to it that the reader perceives similarities and differences, continuity and discontinuity. They enable the reader to get a preliminary impression of the text.

An analysis of the expression forms brings this preliminary strategic guiding of the reader to the surface. Such an analysis consists of a catalogue and an arrangement of textual elements which are phonetic (sounds), prosodic (metre), narrative (characters), syntactic (grammatical forms), semantic (words) and discursive (points of view). These textual elements draw the readers' attention either because of repetitions and similarities, or by differences. An analysis of these expression forms can make clear how continuities and discontinuities function for the reader as immediately visible signs or signals which refer to underlying structures of meaning.

### 4.1 Phonetic and Prosodic Signals

#### *a. Repetitions and similarities*

From the very start of Gen 2-3 the reader is struck by the similarity between the repeatedly recurring terms *adam* (man) and *adama* (earth). Nearly all verses include one of both words. The repetitions of *adam* and *adama* and their phonetic similarity indicate to the reader the importance of and the relation between these terms.

In the same way the phonetic similarity between *iš* (man) and *išša* (woman) (2:23,24) is for the reader a sign of the close relation of these words. This link is emphasized in 3:6 because *išša* (woman) and *išah* (her husband) occur side by side.

From 2:25 on we find *erom* (naked) and *arum* (shrewd) several times (2:25; 3:1,7,10,11). The phonetic similarity already existing between both words is given more emphasis when *erom* is used in the plural in 2:25: *arummim* (naked). This phonetic similarity functions as a signal. It immediately makes clear to the reader that something is happening at the content level of the text.

The word *arum* (shrewd) also sounds similar to *arur* (accursed). The meaning of this phonetic similarity is reinforced because both concepts occur in identical clauses in 3:1 and 3:14: *arum mi-kol hayyat hassade* (the most shrewd of all animals in the field) and *arur mi-kol (...) hayyat hassade* (the most accursed of all animals in the field). This similarity points out to the reader the relation between verses 3:1 and 3:14.

### b. Differences

There are in Gen 2–3 a few verses which are distinguishable from the others by a definite prosodic structure. Verse 2:23 is an example of such a verse. The repetition of the words *zot* (this), which occurs at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the verse, *etsem* (bones) and *basar* (flesh), as well as the similarity between *iš* (man) and *išša* (woman) reveal the cohesion within this verse. Moreover, the fact that the two verse halves of 2:23 consist of three verse feet each, 2+2+2 and 3+2+2, gives a strong metrical rhythm to the verse. Metre, repetition and similarity together give this verse a poetic character and as a result it is distinguished from the prose style of the surrounding verses. This prosodic strategy forces the reader to pay considerable attention to this verse.

Verses 3:14–19 are also distinguishable from the surrounding verses. Both the repetition of *arur* (accursed), *itsabon* (effort) and *kol yeme hayyeka* (all the days of your life), the combination of *kol yeme hayyeka* with *akal* (to eat), and the repetition of the vowel *a* in 3:14, 17 and 19, make the internal cohesion of these verses clear. What is more, the poetic metre reinforces the typical character of these verses. This textual strategy draws the attention of the reader to these verses.

## 4.2 Narrative Signals

### a. Repetitions and similarities

The character *yhwh elohim* occurs eighteen times in Gen 2–3, so that it is immediately clear to the reader that he is a central figure in the story. The same applies to the character *ha-adam* (man) which occurs no less than twenty-four times in Gen 2–3.

### b. Differences

There is a striking difference between *elohim* and *yhwh elohim* as they appear in 3:1–7. This difference in the meaning of one and the same character is a signal to the reader to beware.

Verses 3:1–7 differ in another respect from the surrounding text. In 2:4b–25 (with the exception of 2:24) mention is only made of man in the sense of human being *ha-adam*. In 3:1–7 mention is made of woman *išša* and her husband *išah* and not of man *ha-adam*. In 3:8–24 the term *ha-adam* returns and *išah* her husband has disappeared. So, 3:1–7 are the only verses which do not contain the word *ha-adam* and but do contain both the words woman *išša* and her husband *išah*.

### 4.3 Syntactic signals

#### a. Repetitions and similarities

In a great number of the main clauses the subject is *yhwh elohim* and the verb is an imperfect consecutive or narrativus<sup>6</sup> (2:7,8,9,15,16,17,18,19,21, 22; 3:9,11,13,14,21,22,23,24). Also in main clauses in which *ha-adam* is the subject, the verb form is always a narrativus (2:20,23,25; 3:10,12,10). The same applies to the most of the other subjects. Subject and narrativus form the regular grammatical structure. Whenever the text deviates from this pattern, one can speak of a syntactically significant signal.

Before 3:8 there is nowhere a direct dialogue between YHWH God and man, after 3:8 there is. In every verse from 3:9 to 3:19 the first and second persons singular of personal pronouns, verb forms and pronominal suffixes to nouns are frequently used. These syntactic signs draw the reader's attention to a change in the relation between YHWH and man.

#### b. Differences

As the whole text is characterized by subject plus narrativus, those verses which are different attract the reader's attention. This occurs six times.

a. In verses 3:16 and 3:17 YHWH God is the subject, but his acting is not expressed by a narrativus but by a perfect. This introduces the direct speech of YHWH God to woman (3:16) and man (3:17). On the one hand this creates a distinction from 3:14, in which God's talking is expressed by means of a narrativus. On the other hand the perfect tenses used in 2:16 and 3:17 show a similarity between YHWH God's talking to woman and to man. These perfect tenses with YHWH God as the subject are syntactic signals which point to the distinct character of these two verses.

b. In verse 2:5 the term *terem* (before, not yet) is used with a verb in the imperfect tense and expresses "before". In this case it does not refer to a time which is not yet past, but to a time which has not even begun. This tense makes it clear to the reader that 2:5 takes place before the events that will be related afterwards in narrativi.

c. In verse 2:6 the subject *ed* (flood) is provided with a verb in the imperfect tense. On the one hand Gen 2:6 is distinct from the preceding verse 2:5 because of its positive contents, in contrast to the negative contents of 2:5 (characterized by *lo*, *ayn* - no, none), and on the other hand Gen 2:6 is distinct from the following verses because of the imperfect verb form, in

<sup>6</sup> The Hebrew language has a so-called narrative verb form or narrativus, which indicates subsequent actions in a story. The narrativus is an imperfect preceded by "and" (*wayyiqtol*). See Gesenius-Kautzsch par.49a.b: "One of the most striking peculiarities in the Hebrew consecution of tenses is the phenomenon that, in representing a series of past events, only the first verb stands in the perfect, and the narration is continued in the imperfect. (...) This progress in the sequence of time, is regularly indicated by a pregnant "and" and is called *waw* consecutive."



contrast to 2:7ff, which contain verb forms in the *narrativus*. The sequence of the subject *ed* the verb *ya'ale* as well as *we-* before the subject and the imperfect, which indicates a recurrence in the past, point the reader at the particular position of this verse.

d. In verse 2:10 *nahar* (river) is not provided with a *narrativus* but with a participle. This participle expresses an action which is still going on (depending on the context) in the present or in the past.

e. The imperfect tense in 2:24, which describes the actions of man, indicates that in this case we are not dealing with an action completed in the past, but with an action that is still not complete.

f. In verse 3:1 the serpent's action is described and in this description the verb form used is a perfect tense. This perfect tense and the order subject – verb form indicate a new beginning in the story, the beginning of an episode which is continued by the *narrativi* in Gen 3. Apart from this, only the aforementioned perfect tenses in 3:16 and 3:17 are striking.

In Gen 2–3 the verb forms are usually followed by the subject, but in the case of *ed* (flood) in 2:6, *nahar* (river) in 2:10, and *naḥaš* (serpent) in 3:1 the order is inverted. The striking syntactic sentence order draws the reader's attention to these characters.

In Gen 2–3 man and woman usually appear as separate characters provided with singular verb forms. Only in 2:25–3:8 do man and woman not appear separately but as one united subject. This is made clear from the verb form which appears twelve times in the plural. The syntactic signals point out this unity.

#### 4.4 Semantic Signals

##### *a. Repetitions and similarities*

A number of words occur repeatedly in Gen 2–3: *adama* earth (6x), *akal* to eat (21x), *kol* all, everything, everybody (18x) (as a result of the repeated combination with *lo* not, the opposition everything – nothing is reinforced), *ets* tree (14x, often in combination with *akal* to eat), the combination Eden – garden – east (6x), *yada* to know (8x, it appears four times as an infinitive with good or evil as object), *zot* this (3x) and *basar* flesh (3x). Such repetition draws the attention, and the reader is invited to use these signs in his interpretation of the text. At the same time this complex of repetitions turns the text into a coherent unity for the reader.

Repetition of phrases also occurs in Gen 2–3: placing in the garden (2:8,15), expelling from the garden (3:23,24), becoming alive (2:7a,7b), dying (2:17: paronomastic infinitive), coming out of the earth (3:19,23) and returning to the earth (3:19b,23).

### *b. Differences*

A certain coherence exists within Gen 2-3 because of the repetition of words, wordpairs or content. On the other hand there are words, compounds or contents which occur only once in Gen 2-3 and attract the reader's attention for that reason. They point the reader at the distinct semantic positions of these words and the verses in which they occur. For example, the words *ed* (flood) in 2:6 and *ab we-em* (father and mother) in 2:24, the wordpair *išah immah* (her husband with her) in 3:7 and the word *elohim* (God) in 3:1-5, whereas in the other verses of Gen 2-3 only *yhw* *elohim* (YHWH God) occur.

## **4.5 Discursive Signals**

### *a. Repetitions and similarities*

Nearly the whole text is written as a succession of *narrativi*, with a narrator who is not present in the story. The events are related to the reader by an omniscient narrator.

### *b. Differences*

There are, however, verses which in varying degrees do not fit in this story told by an omniscient narrator. The most characteristic of these verses is 2:24 because there the narrator of the text becomes visible. Both the characters father and mother, which occur only once, and the verb forms in the imperfect tense indicate that this verse does not fit in the time sphere of the narrative and therefore refers to the communicative context of the narrator and the reader.

In the section dealing with the syntactic signals it has already been pointed out that the verses 2:6,10,24; 3:1,16-17, which do not contain *narrativi*, have a different relation to the time sphere of the narrative or story from that of the passages which do contain a *narrativus*. To a degree they free themselves from the narrative and thus occupy a different position in the transfer of the narrative from narrator to reader.

## **4.6 Final Remarks**

The phonetic, prosodic, narrative, syntactical, semantic and discursive-communicative signals direct the reader to certain textual elements. These textual elements function for the reader as signs which refer to underlying structures of meaning. They are the expression forms which guide the reader in his first impression of Gen 2-3.

## 5. THE NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

### 5.1 Introduction

After a first orientation on the basis of the expression forms the reader is from then on guided by the narrative structure of the text. The generation of a narrative structure of a text is strategic, that is to say the construction of a narrative network is controlled by a strategy, a plan to bring about a certain meaning effect in the reader. The narrative structure, or the arrangement of the elements of meaning in a story, guides the reader in the process of giving meaning to or interpretation of the text. In a narrative text the elements of meaning are arranged in such a way that the reader can detect the development in the story: there is a beginning which gradually develops into ever-changing situations and which results in a conclusion. The transformation of the beginning to the end is brought about by the actions of characters which relate to each other in a certain way. The reader is supposed to follow this narrative transformation in his interpretation of the text. He is able to interpret because of the correspondence which exists between the order of actions and development in the narrative text and the order of events in reality. For the narrative structure is indirectly motivated by reality, insofar as the linearity of the transformation is analogous to the sequence of events in reality. Because of this analogy, this "iconic" relation between text and reality, the reader can follow and interpret the narrative plot or development.

The following analysis of the narrative structure in Gen 2:4b-3:24 is mainly based on Greimas' narrative semiotics, to the extent that the narrative lines and arrangements are taken to be directives to the reader, who in response to them has become active himself. Although Greimas does not actually acknowledge the role of the reader and looks upon a narrative analysis as a textual affair which is not related to the reader and reality, it is nevertheless possible to follow Peirce's semiotics (according to whom the process of interpretation or semiosis is one in which the text, the reader and reality are involved) and still examine the narrative structure of a text as a narrative arrangement of elements of meaning which demand the reader to make choices and arrangements. In this way the narrative analysis is given "pragmatic" orientation.<sup>7</sup>

After a long period of diachronic and comparative research into Gen 2-3, a number of synchronic interpretations of Gen 2-3 have appeared in the last few decades. They are sometimes narrative and often semantic in nature. Over and over again two identical results appear from the narrative

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<sup>7</sup> Ever since Morris (1938) pragmatics has been defined as one of the three elements of semiotics; the others are semantics and syntactics.

analyses of Gen 2-3. In the first place it becomes clear that Gen 2:4b-3:24 is a much more coherent text than had appeared from diachronic research (tradition, redaction and form criticism). In the second place it becomes clear that the relation between man and the earth is much more prominent in the text than had previously been assumed. Some see this relation as determining everything; to others, who may not quite go as far as this, it structures and determines the form of the narrative to a very large degree.

In the narrative analyses which have appeared so far the author is either very selective and restricts himself to one narrative line, or offers a general survey of the way the text is built up, without paying attention to the role of smaller textual fragments and without a detailed analysis of the relation between the parts. The narrative analysis offered here will be more detailed and more attention will be paid to as many textual elements as possible and the relation between them. However, it will be necessary to give some insight into the narrative analyses of Gen 2-3 published until now. This can be done by making use of the most recent work in this field by David Jobling (1986), who also refers to previous synchronic studies.<sup>8</sup>

## Excursus

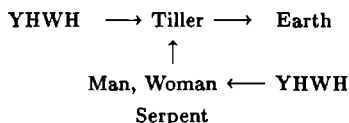
Jobling's aim is to show by means of his narrative analysis of Gen 2:4b-3:24 that there are two narrative structures or models in this text, the model of the "fall" and that of "the man tilling the earth". The first model is present in 2:4b-25 and is usually called "creation and fall". Jobling believes that the creation is in the service of the fall and therefore he opts for the name "fall". Since this model does not adequately deal with the role of the earth and the garden, he considers the model of the "tiller" as a necessary second model. The discussion of this second model takes up the major part of his analysis. He describes this as follows (p.25-26). (a) Beginning (2:4b-7): the earth which had neither water nor farmer, now receives both. (b) Act of villainy (2:8-15): YHWH in the role of the villain steals man from the earth and puts him in his private property, the garden. (c) Counteraction and struggle (2:16-3:17): there are weak spots in the villain's scheme: if man eats of a certain tree in the in the garden, the villain will lose his hold on him. The villain therefore protects the tree by means of threats. Later on there is a counter-action against the villain and the battle is fought in his absence. (d) The hero receives a mark (3:8-19): the villain leaves his mark (curse) on the hero

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<sup>8</sup> In *Semera* 18 (1980), containing structuralist analyses of Gen 2-3, the narrative analysis of Gen 2-3 is Jobling's. He had previously published narrative analyses of 1 Sam 13-31, Num 11-12, and Kg 17-18 (Jobling 1978). He has recently published a collection of structuralist studies of the Hebrew Bible, including Gen 2-3 (Jobling 1986). The analysis of Gen 2-3 is partly narrative and partly semantic in nature. The narrative analysis (1986: 20-27), which appears to be based on an earlier version previously published in *Semera* 1980, occupies a central position.

who defeated him. (e) The hero returns home (3:22-24): man returns to the place from where he began, the earth.

Jobling himself points out a number of arguments against this model, such as YHWH's appearance as a villain, the fact that YHWH, apart from being a villain, is also the sender or destinator and that YHWH himself offers the help for the counter-action and as such is responsible for the weak spot in his scheme. Jobling summarizes the second structure in the following actantial model



He concludes, finally: "In sum, the same character Yahweh invests the Greimassian roles of sender and opponent, a mark of a profoundly ambiguous text" (26). This is a remarkable conclusion. There are many more textual objections to be made besides the ones already provided by Jobling himself, so that it is no exaggeration to speak of an unjustifiable analysis.

Having developed the second model of the tiller in this way, Jobling argues in the last part of his narrative analysis in favour of a combination of both models. According to him, the first model of the fall indicates an important theme and it reveals the mythical structure of the text. The situation before the fall is judged favourably; but after the fall it is judged unfavourably, so that in this mythical structure the final outcome receives a negative judgement. Jobling believes that the second model of the tiller shows the deeper unity of the text and that it has a fairy-tale structure, in the centre of which is the pattern of order – chaos – order restored and in this fairy-tale structure the final situation receives rather a positive judgement. The two models therefore show diametrically opposed structures in the text. Jobling notices this paradox, as he calls it; he does not solve it in his narrative analysis but actually takes it as the starting point of his semantic analysis.

This analysis is unacceptable to my mind. Many textual elements argue against it while a description or an explanation of the coherence of the textual parts is completely lacking. Furthermore, this analysis is methodologically inadequate, because it violates the logic of the method: compare YHWH, who combines the role of sender and opponent.

With this narrative analysis of Jobling and other authors in the background, a synchronic narrative analysis now follows<sup>9</sup> which starts from an explicit method and which aims to explain the cohesion of as many textual elements and textual parts as possible.

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<sup>9</sup> Because this part of the analysis is an independent narrative analysis, I shall refer to few other authors. However, in the semantic analysis (chapter 6) the arguments of other authors will be discussed.

## 5.2 The beginning and end of Gen 2:4b–3:24

A narrative analysis starts from the viewpoint that a narrative text is characterized by a plot or a development of the story from a situation at the beginning to an end situation, and that this development takes place as a result of the actions of characters or actants. Consequently a narrative analysis should consist of three parts:

- a. a determination of the beginning and the end situation of a text
- b. an investigation of the actions of the various subject-actants
- c. an explanation of how the actions of the various actants are connected.

In this section (5.2) the first part is central. The next paragraph (5.3) deals with the second and third parts.

The story begins in Gen 2:4b as follows: "When YHWH God made earth and heaven, no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no plants of the field had yet sprouted, because YHWH God had not let it rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the earth." This beginning is distinct from the preceding text because of the emphasis given to the earth or world *erets*. Unlike Gen 1:1–2:4a, in which heaven and earth occupy a central position, from now on (2:4b) everything hinges around the world *erets* and the ground/earth *adama* as the part of the world man is most closely related to. This relation is clear right from the start. For in 2:5 it is stated that *adama* is dependent on the toil of man, *adam*. The linguistic signs *adam* and *adama* present this relation and the link between them to the reader in a direct way.

From a narrative point of view this beginning (2:4b–5) of the text is characterized by two deficiencies: the earth has no water and the earth does not have man to till it. The first deficiency is removed in 2:6: "And a flood welled up from the earth and watered the entire surface of the earth." There is still the second deficiency: the earth still does not have man. In 2:7 man is created: "Then YHWH God formed man from the dust of the earth and blew the breath of life into his nostrils, and man became a living being." The link between man and earth is apparent: the earth is dependent on man (2:5) and man is made from material of the earth (2:7). However, the creation of man does not remove the second deficiency, unlike the first deficiency (viz. the deficiency of water) which had been removed in 2:6. Man does exist, but is not yet tilling the earth.

A new part begins in the following verses (2:8vv) which no longer bears on the *adama* in general, but refers instead to a garden in Eden. This garden was created for man (2:8) and contains plants which man may enjoy and eat, while a river ensures the supply of water (2:10–14). The text continues in 2:15 "YHWH God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden to till it and to guard it." The two necessary conditions

of the water supply and of man as tiller are in this way fulfilled in the garden, so that the earth or the soil in the garden can bring forth plants and food. But for the earth outside the garden the second condition has not yet been fulfilled, because there the earth *adama* as yet lies fallow. There is no tiller present and as a result there is no crop. For the time being the story is continued in the garden.

The beginning of Gen 2–3 is summarized as follows. At first the two deficiencies are mentioned in 2:4b–6. The first one is immediately removed, the second one only partly. The result of this is that one deficiency remains: the earth-*adama*, lacks man-*adam* as its tiller. The relation between the basic notions in the narrative structure is rendered immediately clear to the reader by means of the linguistic signs *ed*, *adam*, *adama*.

The end of the story is formed by verses 3:22–24, in which the deficiency which existed in the beginning is removed: *adama* now receives *adam* as its tiller. If in the intermediate period the earth was only linked to man within the garden, it now establishes contact with man outside the garden as well. Verse 3:23 sums this up well: “So YHWH God sent him from the garden of Eden, to till the earth from which he was taken.” The relation between man and the earth forms the beginning and the end of the story, and the garden was only an intermediate stage.

The end of Gen 2–3 entirely ties in with the beginning: the deficiency of 2:4b–6 is removed in 3:23–24. The earth acquired man as its tiller. In addition to this Gen 3:22–24 also contains other elements, such as the knowledge of good and bad and the tree of life. From this it appears that the story of Gen 2–3 not only deals with a (main) transformation of the beginning to the end, but also with other transformations. A more specific narrative analysis of this main transformation and the other transformations and their internal cohesion can now follow.

### 5.3 Subjects and their Actions

The development from the beginning of a narrative text to its end is not brought about by one single action, but is the result of a large number of connected actions performed by subject-actants. As a result of these actions the subjects change situations and bring about transformations. All these transformations together determine the development of the plot.

In Greimas' narrative semiotics these transformations are described as narrative programmes. A narrative programme can be defined as the change that takes place in the situation in which a subject (the “subject of state”  $S_S$ ) is placed, and this change is brought about by an acting subject (the “subject of action”  $S_A$ ). In other words, the development in a story takes place because acting subjects ( $S_A$ ) ensure that they themselves or other subjects ( $S_S$ ) are related to values or objects of value, i.e. objects

which are important or of value to them. Two types of narrative programmes can be distinguished. The first is the acting of  $S_A$  which results in  $S_S$  acquiring an object of value which it did not possess before, that is to say  $S_A$  brings about a relation between  $S_S$  and an object which did not exist before. The disjunction relation between subject and object (represented as  $S \vee O$ ) then changes into a conjunction relation (represented as  $S \wedge O$ ). This narrative programme can be summarized as follows

$$F_{S_A} \Rightarrow [(S_S \vee O) \rightarrow (S_S \wedge O)]$$

I.e.: a narrative programme consists of a function  $F$ , of a constitutive relation between two terms or functives. The first term is a relation of quality (the so-called *énoncé d'état*), a relation between actants defined as a conjunction or disjunction relation between a subject and an object :  $S \wedge O$  or  $S \vee O$ . The second term is a relation of "doing" or action (*énoncé de faire*) ( $\Rightarrow$ ), a transformative action of an actant ( $S_A$ ) effectuated on the relations of quality. In other words, a narrative programme consists of the action of an acting subject ( $S_A$ ), which brings about the transformation ( $\Rightarrow$ ) of a situation in which a subject of state ( $S_S$ ) does not possess an object of value into a situation in which the subject does possess this object. The second type of narrative programme is the acting of  $S_A$  the result of which is that a situation in which  $S_S$  possesses an object of value is changed into a situation in which  $S_S$  no longer possesses it. That is to say the relation which existed between  $S_S$  and an object of value is no longer extant. This second type of narrative programme can be summarized as follows:

$$F_{S_A} \Rightarrow [(S_S \wedge O) \rightarrow (S_S \vee O)]$$

In a narrative text subjects perform various acts and as such bring about several transformations, which means that there are several narrative programmes in a text. A distinction can be made between actions which are either a condition for or auxiliary to actions, and independent actions. The first of these are auxiliary programmes ( $APs$ ), the second are independent or basic narrative programmes ( $NP_s$ ). Depending on the complexity of a story the number of  $NP_s$  and  $APs$  may be larger or smaller. There may even be a general main narrative programme ( $MNP$ ) within which all basic narrative programmes are structured. The general narrative development or the whole of transformations in a story can in this way be described as a coherent sequence of auxiliary programmes, basic narrative programmes and a main narrative programme. A narrative analysis therefore arranges the actions of the subjects in a hierarchical structure in which  $APs$  are in the service of  $NP_s$ , while  $NP_s$  are independent and form the linking elements within the whole of an  $MNP$ .



Within a single text there are not only the various actions of one, but also of more subjects. These are numbered (following the chronological order they occur in the text) to distinguish them ( $S_1$ ,  $S_2$  etc.). Since their actions relate to varying objects, these will also be numbered ( $O_1$ ,  $O_2$  etc.).

The subjects and objects occurring in Gen 2:4b-3:24 are:

### Subjects

$S_1$ : YHWH God  
 $S_2$ : man (human)  
 $S_3$ : man (male)  
 $S_4$ : woman  
 $S_5$ : woman and man  
 $S_6$ : serpent  
 $S_7$ : earth  
 $S_8$ : flood  
 $S_9$ : river

### Objects

$O_1$ : garden  
 $O_2$ : water  
 $O_3$ : food  
 $O_4$ : forbidden food  
 $O_5$ : food of the tree of life  
 $O_6$ : knowledge of good and bad  
 $O_7$ : awareness of nakedness  
 $O_8$ : procreative capacity  
 $O_9$ : mortality  
 $O_{10}$ : clothing  
 $O_{11}$ : earth  
 $O_{12}$ : man (human)

In the nine sub-sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.9 the subjects and their actions will be investigated separately. This will be done by means of one and the same pattern.

#### *1. The description of the installation of the subject*

This description will arise from the answer to the question: when and how does the subject appear for the first time?

#### *2. The analysis of the various actions of the subject*

In this analysis three moments will be dealt with: (a) the modalization, (b) the realization and (c) the glorification of the subject. The modalization refers to the acquisition of the modal objects

/to have to/ or /to want to/: either by means of a contract which gives the subject the authority, duty or responsibility to act, or by means of his own desire which gives the subject the will to act.

/to be able to/: by means of a spatial conjunction with the object of value and/or by means of an adjuvant or helper who enables the subject to act.

/to know how to/: by means of a contract which gives the subject information about the action or by means of information about the action

acquired either by the subject itself or given to it by another subject.

The realization answers the question how the subject acquires the object of value. The glorification or sanctioning deals with the recognition or appreciation and disapproval or punishment the subject receives for his acts. Often these three moments, modalization, realization and glorification, are not explicitly present in the text but they are on the whole taken to be implicitly present. When this is the case a dash (–) will be found after (a), (b) or (c).

### 3. The description of the actantial relations of the subject

The actions of the subject are related to other narrative actants. The subject of action  $S_A$  which connects a subject of state  $S_S$  with or separates it from an object of value (and as such aided by an adjuvant or obstructed by an opponent), may in turn be incited to act by a destinator or sender ( $D'$ ). The destinator is the actant responsible for the necessity, pressure, obligation, in other words the contract; he incites or “manipulates”. The receiver of the contract is the destinee ( $D''$ ). He judges or sanctions the actions of the subject of action  $S_A$ . In other words:

$D'$  : causes to act; incites or prompts  $S_A$

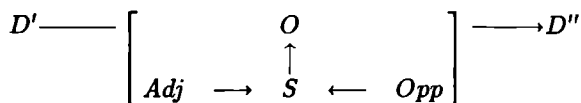
$S_A$  : causes to be; acts or performs an action with respect to  $S_S$

$S_S$  : is in a conjunction or disjunction relation with the object of value

$D''$  : evaluates or sanctions the actions of  $S_A$ .

Consequently the actions of the subjects are framed on a hierarchically higher level within a contractual structure, with on the one hand the destinator and on the other hand the destinee. The destinator manipulates or directs the action of the subject  $S_A$ , which enables either itself or another subject to acquire an object of value. The destinator therefore initiates of a narrative programme. The destinee evaluates, judges or sanctions the actions of  $S_A$ . The destinee therefore judges a narrative programme. The narrative programme is in this way part and parcel of the contractual relation between  $D'$  and  $D''$ .

The relation between the actants  $D'$ ,  $D''$ ,  $S$ ,  $O$ ,  $Adj$  and  $Opp$  are represented in the so called actantial model.<sup>10</sup>



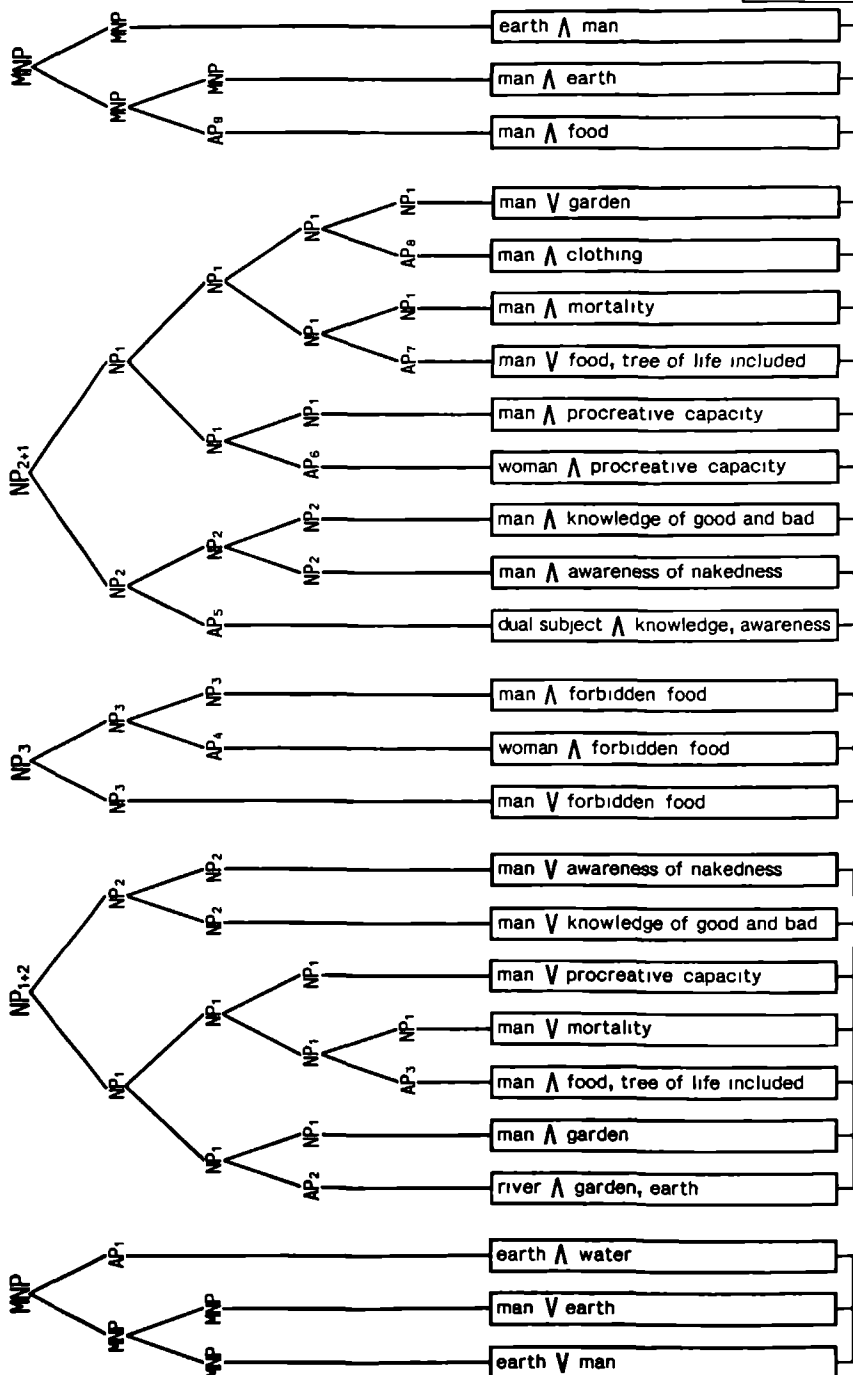
<sup>10</sup> In Greimas' actantial model there are no square brackets. In section 5.3 square brackets will be added to his model to make immediately clear to the reader that an  $NP$ , i.e. that which is inside the brackets, is part and parcel of the relation between  $D'$  and  $D''$ .

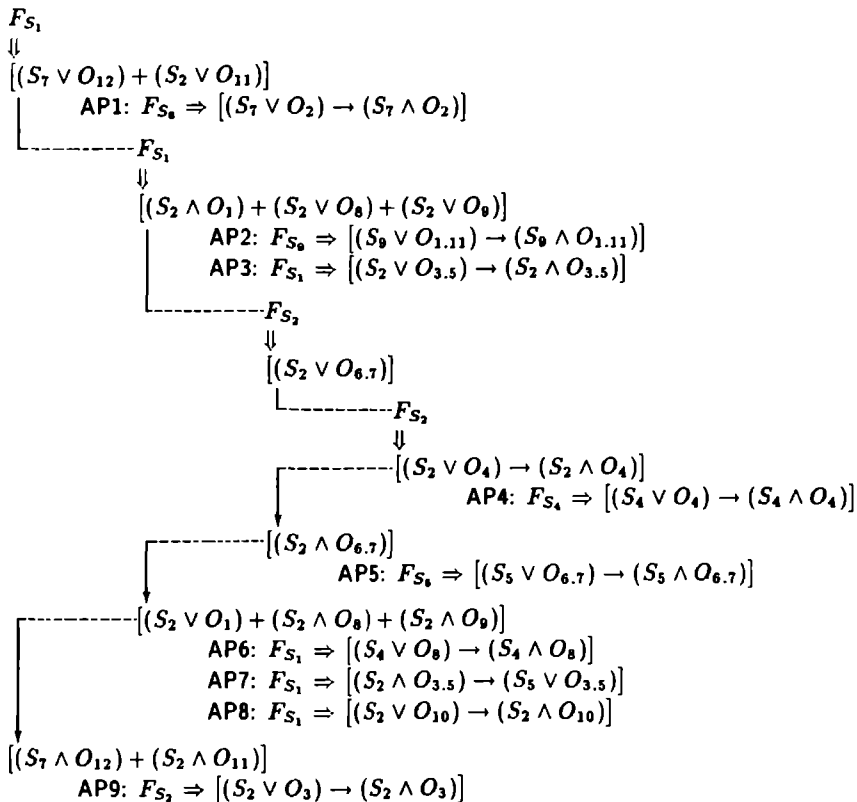
Often several actantial roles are united in one and the same character. For example the subject-actant can at the same time play the part of destinator: in this case the character sends or manipulates itself (autodes-tinator) or other subjects. However, in most cases a subject-actant plays at the same time the role of destinee: as a subject the character then executes the action to acquire or lose an object of value; as a destinee it receives and evaluates the contract offered by the destinator.

#### *4. The analysis of the subject's contribution to the transformation*

Because of his actions the subject contributes to the narrative transformation. Some of the actions turn out to be a condition for other actions: they are the auxiliary programmes (*AP*) of the latter actions or basic narrative programmes (*NP*). These narrative programmes can be the links of a general main programme (*MNP*). In this part of the analysis the contribution of the subject to the narrative transformation will be described as an ordered sequence of auxiliary programmes, basic narrative programmes and a main narrative programme. The ultimate result is represented in figure 3 (tree diagram) and figure 4 (a graphic representation). It is advisable to refer to these figures continually when reading sections 5.3.1 to 5.3.9.

Fig. 3



Subjects:

$S_1$ : YHWH God  
 $S_2$ : man (human)  
 $S_3$ : man (male)  
 $S_4$ : woman  
 $S_5$ : woman and man  
 $S_6$ : serpent  
 $S_7$ : earth  
 $S_8$ : flood  
 $S_9$ : river

Objects:

$O_1$ : garden  
 $O_2$ : water  
 $O_3$ : food  
 $O_4$ : forbidden food  
 $O_5$ : food of the tree of life  
 $O_6$ : knowledge of good and bad  
 $O_7$ : awareness of nakedness  
 $O_8$ : procreative capacity  
 $O_9$ : mortality  
 $O_{10}$ : clothing  
 $O_{11}$ : earth  
 $O_{12}$ : man (human)

### 5.3.1 Subject 1: YHWH God

#### 1. *The installation of subject 1*

In our text  $S_1$  is not installed, because he already occurs as subject in the preceding story. It is assumed that the reader is acquainted with  $S_1$ .

#### 2. *The actions of subject 1*

=Creating=

(a)  $S_1$  is not modalized; his competence is taken for granted. In other words: the narrative organization calls for a reading in which it is assumed that YHWH God is a subject which does not require modalization.

(b) The realization of  $S_1$  is shown in some seven verbs: to make, to form, to breathe, to plant, to make grow, to build and to give.

(c) The creation of the animals is acknowledged by  $S_2$  (man) by means of name-giving; but it is not glorified (2:19–20): for the animals are not acknowledged as equal helpers. The creation of woman is glorified by  $S_2$  in 2:23; this glorification is toned down in 3:12.

=Placing=

(a) –

(b)  $S_1$  determines the position of the garden (in Eden, in the east 2:8), of the trees in the garden (in the centre 2:9) and of the animals ( $S_1$  leads them to man 2:22). But often this act of placing of  $S_1$  refers to man.  $S_1$  forms man out of the earth (2:7), places him in the garden (2:8,15), sends him out of the garden (3:23) and sends him to the earth outside the garden (3:24).

(c) –

=Commanding and prohibiting=

(a) –

(b)  $S_1$  issues commandments and prohibitions and realizes itself that way. The commandments concerned are the following: 1. to work in the garden and to guard over it (2:15); 2. to eat of all the trees in the garden (2:16); 3. to bring forth children (3:16); 4. to die or to be mortal (3:19); 5. to till the earth (3:23), and the prohibitions concerned are: 1. not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad (2:17)<sup>11</sup> and 2. not to eat of the tree of life (3:22).

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<sup>11</sup> Normally *ets hadda'at tob wa-ra* is translated by “the tree of the knowledge of good and evil”. For our translation “the tree of the knowledge of good and bad” see 6.6.2.

(c) Glorification of these actions occurs with the second and third commandments and with the first prohibition. The second command is met with denial (3:1) and is confirmed (3:2). The third commandment becomes glorified by the giving of a name to woman in 3:20. The first prohibition is first confirmed in 3:3 and then turned down in 3:4-6.

=Talking to oneself=

(a) -

(b) Twice  $S_1$  talks to himself in a kind of consultation with himself (2:18; 3:22) and the omniscient narrator gives an inside view of this conversation with the self. In this consultation  $S_1$  expresses his will with respect to a different acting, viz. making and sending, which is creative and placing respectively. In other words, this realization of  $S_1$  in his act of speaking is at the same time the modalization for another form of acting of  $S_1$ .

(c) -

=Speaking to others=

(a) -

(b)  $S_1$  actualizes himself repeatedly in this acting (3:9,11,13,14,16,17). The speaking of  $S_1$  to other subjects does not take place on the basis of simultaneity and is consequently not part of a dialogue between equals. Before the transgression  $S_1$  does not address other subjects directly; after the transgression,  $S_1$  speaks as a superior, that is to say as one who examines and punishes.  $S_1$  does not have to be modalized, he is assumed to be competent in this respect.

(c) The force and value of this speaking is acknowledged and confirmed by the fear felt by  $S_2$  (man) when he hears the voice of  $S_1$  and as a result of this fear  $S_2$  hides himself.

### 3. *The actantial relation of $S_1$*

The narrative character YHWH God is very much present in Gen 2-3. In his creating and placing he appears as subject ( $S_A$ ). As a result of this acting  $S_1$  sees to it that other subjects ( $S_S$ ) acquire objects of value, for example as man  $S_2$  who acquires the objects of value garden, food and earth among others, or the earth  $S_7$  which acquires the object of value man. In addition YHWH God repeatedly takes upon himself the actantial role of destinator. As  $D'$  YHWH God offers man  $S_2$  contracts in the form of commandments and prohibitions and the realization of these contracts lies with  $S_2$ . These contracts are:

Contract 1: to till the garden

Contract 2: to eat of all trees in the garden

Contract 3: not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad

Contract 4: to bring forth children

Contract 5: to die and not being allowed to eat of the tree of life

Contract 6: to till the earth.

Man receives these contracts (man is  $D''$ ), has to execute them as subject (man is  $S_A$ ), and has to acquire the objects of value as subject (man is  $S_S$ ). YHWH God is the destinator; he provides the contracts and desires the subject to perform these actions. This is summarized as follows in an actantial model:

$$D'_{\substack{\text{YHWH} \\ \text{God}}} \longrightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} O \\ \uparrow \\ S_{\text{man}} \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow D''_{\text{man}}$$

In this text YHWH God is neither installed nor modalized as the subject and destinator: his competence is taken for granted. This analysis already makes clear to what extent the narrative arrangement is present in the text as a forceful strategy that steers the reader. In order to be able to place Gen 2-3, the reader has to see YHWH God as an autonomous and supremely competent subject and destinator who creates and places, commands and prohibits, examines and punishes and as such directly or indirectly determines the actions of the subject-actants. It is within this framework that the reader should interpret the actions of the other subjects.

#### 4. The contribution of subject 1 to the narrative transformation

In section 5.2 it appeared that the beginning of Gen 2-3 is characterized by a deficiency or lack, which is that the earth does not have man to till it and that at the end of the text this deficiency was removed. It can now be made clear that this transformation between the beginning and the end of the text is, among other things, the result of the actions of YHWH God. Later it will appear that the actions of other subjects also contribute to this. These actions of YHWH God can be summarized as follows:

$$F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_{12}) \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_{12})]$$

$$F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee man) \rightarrow (earth \wedge man)]$$

and

$$F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_{11}) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_{11})]$$

$$F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee earth) \rightarrow (man \wedge earth)]$$

Before  $S_1$  ( $S_A$ ) brings about this transformation from the situation at the beginning to that of the end both  $S_1$  and other subjects have performed



many actions. The ultimate result of those actions is that the earth ( $S_7$ ) acquires man as an object ( $O_{12}$ ): the earth as subject ( $S_5$ ) comes to function in a new relation to the object man, which is of great importance or value to it. At the same time the result is also that man ( $S_2$ , at the same time  $S_5$ ) acquires the earth as object ( $O_{11}$ ): an object which is of great importance to man. Consequently the general narrative transformation results in an inseparable link or conjunction relation between man and earth and between earth and man. As YHWH God is the one who brings this transformation about from the beginning till the end, it is of great importance to see whether the other actions of YHWH God correspond to this.

In the first part of the episode in the garden (2:8-25) YHWH God ( $S_1$ ) places man ( $S_2$ ) in the garden ( $O_1$ ) to work in it and to guard it. In doing so  $S_1$  ensures that man is placed in a disjunction relation with the earth ( $O_{11}$ ). In the context of the work in the garden  $S_1$  gives food ( $O_3$ ). From this food the tree of life is not excluded, so that  $S_2$  is implicitly placed in a disjunction relation with death or mortality ( $O_9$ ). The schematic representation is as follows:

$$F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \wedge O_1) + (S_2 \vee O_9)]$$

$$F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \wedge garden) + (man \vee mortality)]$$

To enable man to continue his work in the garden and to prevent him from dying,  $S_1$  sees to it that man acquires food, and the tree of life is not excluded from this food. In other words, there are actions performed by  $S_1$  which are in the service of man in the garden and which can therefore be defined as an auxiliary programme  $AP_3$ :<sup>12</sup>

$$AP_3: \quad F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_3) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_3)]$$

$$F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee food) \rightarrow (man \wedge food)]$$

Even though at the beginning and the end of the story YHWH God sees to it that the earth is connected with man, he appears to do the opposite in the first part of the garden episode, because he arranges a conjunction relation of man with the garden and a disjunction relation of man with the earth outside the garden. Furthermore he ensures the continuity of the situation in the garden by means of an auxiliary programme. At the same time it seems that there is another side to God's actions: he creates not only trees for eating, but also a tree which is not for eating, not only life but also the possibility of death, not only a positive commandment

<sup>12</sup>  $AP_1$  and  $AP_2$  are mentioned with  $S_2$ . The numbering of the auxiliary programmes and narrative programmes ( $AP$  and  $NP$  respectively) is based on the order in which they appear in Gen 2-3.

but also a negative prohibition. It is precisely this second dimension, this reverse of the actions of YHWH God, which is dealt with in the last part of the episode in the garden.

In this last part (3:17–22) YHWH God cancels the conjunction relationship between man ( $S_2$ ) and the garden ( $O_1$ ) and links man with the earth outside the garden ( $O_{11}$ ). Furthermore he denies man access to the tree of life, so that mortality ( $O_9$ ) has now fallen to his lot. The transformation which is brought about by YHWH God by means of his acting in the first and last part of the episode in the garden, is therefore as follows:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \wedge O_1) + (S_2 \vee O_9) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1) + (S_2 \wedge O_9)] \\
 \text{NP1:} \quad & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \wedge garden) + (man \vee mortality) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (man \vee garden) + (man \wedge mortality)]
 \end{aligned}$$

This narrative programme at the beginning (2:8–25) and the end (3:17–22) of the episode in the garden runs parallel to the main programme as it is presented in the beginning and end of Gen 2–3 (2:4b–5 and 3:23–24 respectively).  $NP_1$  creates the necessary condition for the execution of the main transformation ( $MNP$ ), for the expulsion of man from the garden enables man to be linked with the earth outside the garden. This is summarized in a diagram:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \wedge O_1) \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1)] \\
 \text{NP1:} \quad & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \wedge garden) \rightarrow (man \vee garden)] \\
 & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_{12}) + (S_2 \vee O_{11}) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_{12}) + (S_2 \wedge O_{11})] \\
 \text{MNP:} \quad & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee man) + (man \vee earth) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (earth \wedge man) + (man \wedge earth)]
 \end{aligned}$$

### 5.3.2 Subject 2: Man (human being)

#### 1. The installation of subject 2

The installation of  $S_2$  comprises three moments. The announcement in 2:5b “there was no man to till the earth”, is followed by a description in 2:7a of the way in which  $S_2$  is installed.  $S_2$  is in a material respect (dust of the earth) as well as in a spiritual respect (breath of life) made capable of

living. The actual realization of the installation of  $S_2$  immediately follows in 2:7b “and man became a living being”.

## 2. The actions of subject 2

=Working in the garden and guarding it=

(a) /to have to/: YHWH God gives  $S_2$  contract 1: to work in the garden and to guard it.

/to be able to/: To make working in the garden possible the following conditions have been fulfilled.  $S_1$  brings about a spatial conjunction between  $S_2$  and the garden (2:8,25). In this way the first condition for the tilling of the garden has been fulfilled. A second condition is that the garden be provided with water. So the water supply to the garden by the river in 2:10-14 is an auxiliary programme ( $AP_2$ ) for the tilling of the earth.

$$\begin{aligned} AP_2: \quad & F_{S_9} \Rightarrow [(S_9 \vee O_{1.11}) \rightarrow (S_9 \wedge O_{1.11})] \\ & F_{river} \Rightarrow [(river \vee garden, earth) \rightarrow (river \wedge garden, earth)] \end{aligned}$$

The food supply of  $S_2$  is a third condition for  $S_2$  to be able to work in the garden. YHWH God provides this food by giving  $S_2$  fruit of the trees (2:8-9, 15-16). This can be represented as auxiliary programme  $AP_3$ .

$$\begin{aligned} AP_3: \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_{3.5}) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_{3.5})] \\ & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee food) \rightarrow (man \wedge food)] \end{aligned}$$

The tilling of the garden by  $S_2$  is closely linked to this food, for by tilling the garden  $S_2$  can eat fruit of the trees and by eating the fruit  $S_2$  can continue to work in the garden. Because of the fact that the fruit of the tree of life also serves as food for  $S_2$ , the continuity of the tilling seems to be guaranteed. However, the question arises whether the help offered by YHWH God to  $S_2$  will also have to be considered a condition for the tilling of the garden. From a narrative point of view, however, the reason for this help remains unclear. Only semantic study can yield conclusive information about its function. At any rate the help does not directly function as serving the tilling of the garden.

/to know how to/: Contract 1 presupposes that  $S_2$  knows how to till the garden and how to guard it. In other words, the reader is supposed to take it for granted that  $S_2$  possesses the knowledge of how to till the garden.

(b) Now that  $S_2$  knows that he has to till the garden and to guard it, and that he can do so with the aid of  $AP_2$  and  $AP_3$ , he might begin to realize

these actions, as he already knew how to till it. But a realization of this is not explicitly mentioned.

(c) –

=Eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad=

(a) /have not to/: YHWH God gives  $S_2$  contract 3: not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad (2:17). At first  $S_2$  accepts this contract, because there is no question of rejection. Later (3:5–7)  $S_2$  rejects the contract, and because of this the modality /have not to/ is not acquired in the end.

/to want to/: Because  $S_2$  accepts woman as destinator,  $S_2$  receives a will to eat from woman.  $S_2$  is therefore not an autodesinator, but continues to derive his will from a source outside himself.

/to be able to/: With the aid of the adjuvants serpent and woman and the spatial conjunction between  $S_2$  and the forbidden food,  $S_2$  is able to eat. The auxiliary programme  $AP_4$  creates the condition for this food, because it is by means of  $AP_4$  that woman acquires the forbidden food.

$$F_{S_4} \Rightarrow [(S_4 \vee O_4) \rightarrow (S_4 \wedge O_4)]$$

$$AP_4: F_{woman} \Rightarrow [(woman \vee forbidden\ food)$$

$$\rightarrow (woman \wedge forbidden\ food)]$$

/to know how to/: Because of the interpretation of the serpent woman ( $S_4$ ) knows, and through her  $S_2$  knows this too, that it is possible to eat of the tree of knowledge. Furthermore, they think they know what the consequences of eating are.

(b) After contract 3 has been broken,  $S_2$  acquires forbidden food ( $O_4$ ) in 3:6 with the aid of  $AP_4$ .  $S_2$  carries out a narrative programme ( $NP_3$ ) in which  $S_2$  acquires the forbidden food:

$$F_{S_2} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_4) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_4)]$$

$$NP_3: F_{man} \Rightarrow [(man \vee forbidden\ food)$$

$$\rightarrow (man \wedge forbidden\ food)]$$

(c) YHWH sanctions the eating of the forbidden food in 3:14–19 in the form of curses and punishment. This sanctioning gets full attention in the text.

=Acquiring knowledge of good and bad; becoming aware of nakedness=

(a) /to have to/: By eating the forbidden food  $S_2$  acquires automatically the knowledge of good and bad and becomes automatically aware of his

nakedness.  $S_2$  is not an autodesinator in this situation because /to have to/ is involved and not /to want to/. It is not clear who the destinator is of this /to have to/.

/to be able to/:  $S_2$  acquires this modality both by acquiring the forbidden food ( $NP_3$ ) and the auxiliary programme  $AP_5$  in which the dual subject ( $S_5$ ) acquires the knowledge of good and bad ( $O_6$ ) and an awareness of his own nakedness ( $O_7$ ).

$$\begin{aligned}
 & F_{S_2} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_4) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_4)] \\
 \text{NP3: } & F_{man} \Rightarrow [(man \vee forbidden\ food) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (man \wedge forbidden\ food)] \\
 & F_{S_5} \Rightarrow [(S_5 \vee O_6\ 7) \rightarrow (S_5 \wedge O_6\ 7)] \\
 \text{AP5: } & F_{dual\ subject} \Rightarrow [(dual\ subject \vee knowledge, awareness) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (dual\ subject \wedge knowledge, awareness)]
 \end{aligned}$$

/to know how to/: It is obvious from the question which  $S_1$  asks  $S_2$  "who told you that you are naked?" and the link of this awareness with the tree of the knowledge of good and bad (3:11) that  $S_2$  has acquired knowledge and awareness by means of  $NP_3$  (eating the forbidden food). In other words, the modal object /to know how to/ coincides with the objects of value  $O_6$  and  $O_7$ .

(b) In 3:7-11 it appears that man has acquired the knowledge of good and bad and an awareness of nakedness. Consequently  $S_2$  carries out the following narrative programme:

$$\begin{aligned}
 & F_{S_2} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_6\ 7) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_6\ 7)] \\
 \text{NP2: } & F_{man} \Rightarrow [(man \vee knowledge, awareness) \\
 & \quad \rightarrow (man \wedge knowledge, awareness)]
 \end{aligned}$$

(c) The acknowledgement of the acquisition of the objects of value  $O_6$  and  $O_7$  goes hand in hand with fear. The result is that  $S_2$  covers himself with leaves and hides himself (3:7-10). Consequently  $S_2$  values his acquisition negatively.

=Acquiring clothing=

(a) /to want to/: The awareness of nakedness gives  $S_2$  the will to hide and cover himself (3:7).

/to be able to/: By means of the spatial conjunction with the fig leaves  $S_2$  can make an apron of fig leaves, but the fact that  $S_2$  hides himself shows

that this cover is inadequate as clothing. That is why a new attempt is made to provide  $S_2$  with new clothing. In 3:21  $S_1$  replaces the apron of fig leaves with animal hides; the competence of YHWH God is taken for granted and the animals, as suppliers of materials, help to make this action possible.

/to know how to/: This modality is implicitly taken for granted in YHWH God.

(b) In 3:21  $S_2$  acquires clothing  $O_{10}$ . This can be represented as auxiliary programme  $AP_8$ :

$$\begin{aligned} AP8: \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_{10}) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_{10})] \\ & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee clothing) \rightarrow (man \wedge clothing)] \end{aligned}$$

(c) -

=Acquiring the procreative capacity=

(a) /to have to/: In 3:16  $S_1$  gives woman ( $S_4$ ) the competence, duty or responsibility to produce offspring. As a result  $S_2$  as well indirectly acquires this capacity. Contract 4, to produce offspring, expresses this duty or responsibility, although the term /to have to/ is somewhat inadequate in this context.

/to be able to/: In  $NP_2$   $S_2$  acquires knowledge of good and bad and an awareness of nakedness and this creates the conditions which enable woman to acquire the procreative capacity. YHWH God then gives woman this capacity by means of contract 4 (3:16) and this functions as an auxiliary programme ( $AP_6$ ) for the acquisition of the procreative capacity by  $S_2$ . In short,  $NP_2$  and  $AP_6$  provide the possibilities which enable  $S_2$  to acquire the procreative competence or capacity.

$$\begin{aligned} & F_{S_2} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_7) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_7)] \\ NP2: \quad & F_{man} \Rightarrow [(man \vee knowledge, awareness) \\ & \rightarrow (man \wedge knowledge, awareness)] \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_4 \vee O_8) \rightarrow (S_4 \wedge O_8)] \\ AP6: \quad & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(woman \vee procreative capacity) \\ & \rightarrow (woman \wedge procreative capacity)] \end{aligned}$$

/to know how to/:  $S_2$  acquires this modality by  $NP_2$  and  $AP_6$ .

(b)  $S_2$  acquires the procreative capacity or the ability to produce offspring. In this sense the modal object /to be able to/ coincides with the object of

value the procreative capacity ( $O_8$ ). The acquisition of  $O_8$  is part of the narrative programme  $NP_1$ :

$$F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_8) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_8)]$$

$$NP1: \quad F_{JHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee \textit{procreative capacity})$$

$$\rightarrow (man \wedge \textit{procreative capacity})]$$

(c) This capacity is acknowledged, as appears from the name of the woman *hawwa*, mother of all living creatures (3:20).

=Acquiring mortality=

(a) /to have to/:  $S_2$  completes a trajectory in connection with contract 3, not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. YHWH God links the sanction of /to have to die/ with breaking this contract in 2:17. After the serpent has denied this sanction in 3:4,  $S_2$  breaks the contract. The result of this breach is that YHWH God offers a new contract to  $S_2$ , viz. contract 5: to die. This time  $S_2$  does not reject the contract. In this way  $S_2$  acquires the modality /to have to die/ (3:17–19, 22–24).

/to be able to/: As YHWH God expels  $S_2$  from the garden and  $S_2$  can no longer eat of the tree of life, mortality has fallen to his lot. In this sense losing the food of the tree of life is an auxiliary programme ( $AP_7$ ) for the realization of  $NP_1$ .

$$F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \wedge O_5) \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_5)]$$

$$AP7: \quad F_{JHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \wedge \textit{food of the tree of life})$$

$$\rightarrow (man \vee \textit{food of the tree of life})]$$

/to know how to/: Because of the sanction attached to contract 3 *mot tamut*, you shall surely die,  $S_2$  acquires knowledge about the fact that death exists as a possibility. As a result of the punishment  $S_2$  knows that death exists as a reality for him (3:17–19, 22–23).

(b)  $S_2$  becomes mortal in 3:17–19, 23. This mortality is an object of value ( $O_9$ ) which coincides with the modal object /to have to/. The acquisition of  $O_9$  is represented as part of  $NP_1$ :

$$NP1: \quad F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_9) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_9)]$$

$$F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee \textit{mortality}) \rightarrow (man \wedge \textit{mortality})]$$

(c) –

=Tilling the earth=

(a) /to have to/: This modality is introduced from the viewpoint of the

narrator in 2:5. Within the story itself  $S_2$  only acquires this modality /to have to/ when YHWH God in 3:17–19,23 peremptorily offers  $S_2$  contract 6: to till the earth.

/to be able to/: Four conditions have to be met before  $S_2$  is able to till the earth. A first condition is that a spatial conjunction should exist between  $S_2$  and the earth outside the garden. In 3:23–24  $S_1$  ensures that  $S_2$  enters on a disjunction relation with the garden. This acting of  $S_1$  is reflected in (a part of)  $NP_1$ :

$$\begin{aligned} NP1: \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \wedge O_1) \rightarrow (S_2 \vee O_1)] \\ & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \wedge garden) \rightarrow (man \vee garden)] \end{aligned}$$

A second condition is that the earth outside the garden is supplied with water. Both the flood, which independently springs up out of the earth, and waters the surface of the earth ( $AP_1$ ), as well as the river from the garden of Eden, which branches off from the garden ( $AP_2$ ), ensure the water supply of the earth outside the garden.

$$\begin{aligned} AP1: \quad & F_{S_8} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_2) \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_2)] \\ & F_{flood} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee water) \rightarrow (earth \wedge water)] \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} AP2: \quad & F_{S_9} \Rightarrow [(S_9 \vee O_{11}) \rightarrow (S_9 \wedge O_{11})] \\ & F_{river} \Rightarrow [(river \vee garden, earth) \\ & \quad \rightarrow (river \wedge garden, earth)] \end{aligned}$$

A third condition is the permanence of tilling the earth. To that end both individual man and the human being as a species have to survive for a considerable period of time. For the individual man it is necessary that  $S_2$  acquires food through tilling the earth: if YHWH God at first provided the food ( $AP_3$ ) in the garden,  $S_2$  himself is now responsible for the food supply ( $AP_9$ ). The survival of the human being as species is ensured by the acquisition of the procreative capacity represented in (a part of)  $NP_1$

$$\begin{aligned} AP9: \quad & F_{S_2} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_3) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_3)] \\ & F_{man} \Rightarrow [(man \vee food) \rightarrow (man \wedge food)] \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} NP1: \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_8) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_8)] \\ & F_{JHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee procreative capacity) \\ & \quad \rightarrow (man \wedge procreative capacity)] \end{aligned}$$



A fourth condition which must be fulfilled is the protection of  $S_2$  by means of clothing.  $S_1$  provides the clothing in 3:21 which is represented in  $AP_8$ . With this action the conditions are fulfilled, so that  $S_2$  is able to till the earth.

$$\begin{aligned} \text{AP8:} \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_2 \vee O_{10}) \rightarrow (S_2 \wedge O_{10})] \\ & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(man \vee clothing) \rightarrow (man \wedge clothing)] \end{aligned}$$

/to know how to/: On the one hand by means of contract 6  $S_2$  acquires implicit knowledge concerning the tilling of the earth; on the other hand the narrator also automatically presupposes that  $S_2$  knows how to till the earth and the reader is supposed to do the same.

(b) The realization of  $S_2$  with respect to the tilling of the earth is lacking in Gen 2-3. The conditions necessary for tilling the earth are given full attention, but the actual realization of this tilling is not. YHWH God links man to the earth outside the garden and this is represented in the main narrative programme:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{MNP:} \quad & F_{S_1} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_{12}) + (S_2 \vee O_{11}) \\ & \quad \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_{12}) + (S_2 \wedge O_{11})] \\ & F_{YHWH} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee man) + (man \vee earth) \\ & \quad \rightarrow (earth \wedge man) + (man \wedge earth)] \end{aligned}$$

In spite of the fact that all the conditions for tilling the earth have been fulfilled and in spite of the link between man and earth,  $S_2$  is not tilling the earth in Gen 2-3.

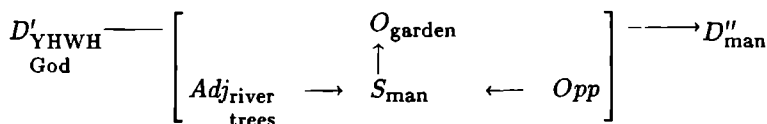
(c) -

### 3. The actantial relations of subject 2

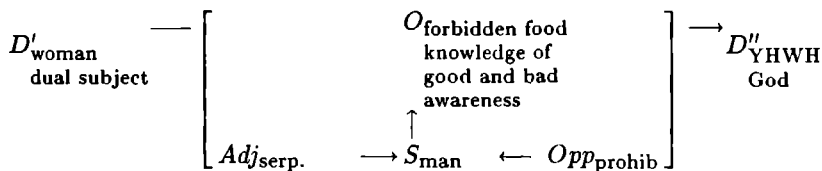
In Gen 2-3  $S_2$  frequently occurs as subject of action  $S_A$  and as subject of state  $S_S$ . The narrative programmes in which  $S_2$  is an acting subject determine to a large degree the plot or narrative development of Gen 2-3. These narrative programmes are framed in a contract structure of destinator and destinee, so that the acting of  $S_2$  is linked with the actant  $D'$  and  $D''$ . The actantial relations between  $S_2$ ,  $D'$  and  $D''$  change in the course of Gen 2-3 in the following way.

1. In Gen 2 YHWH God installs man and gives him contract 1, 2 and 3, to have to work in the garden, to have to eat of all the trees in the garden, not to have to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, and by doing so he incites man to action. Consequently YHWH God is the omnipotent destinator. Man is the subject of action  $S_A$  acquiring

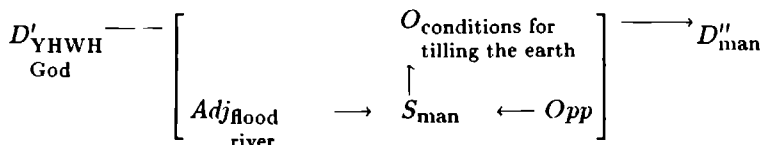
the garden with the assistance of the adjuvants river and trees (water and food supply). Man is the destinatar of the contracts. Usually the destinator manipulates, that is to say he initiates the action, and the destinatar evaluates or sanctions the action. However, although in Gen 2 mention is made of the fact that YHWH God causes man to till the garden, no mention is made of the actual execution of the work nor of the sanctioning. These actantial relations of Gen 2 can be represented by means of the following actantial model:



2. In Gen 3:1-7 woman and dual subject, man and woman together, are the destinators of the action through which man acquires the forbidden food, the knowledge of good and bad and the awareness of nakedness. The serpent here acts as an adjuvant and the prohibition of YHWH God as opponent. Man is the subject of these actions  $S_A$ . YHWH God is the destinatar, because he receives these actions; he is the one who sanctions the autonomous action of the subject and passes judgement on it. This can be represented in the following actantial model:



3. YHWH God immediately responds to the changed actantial constellation: from the first question in the examination onwards (3:9) YHWH God restores his destinatorship and until the end of Gen 3 he never relinquishes it again. As a result of the acting of the destinator man loses the garden, the food of the trees in the garden (including the tree of life) and he acquires the procreative capacity, mortality and clothing. In other words, he acquires capacities which are a condition for being able to till the earth outside the garden. The flood and the subsidiaries of the river, already mentioned in Gen 2, are man's helpers in this: they are the adjuvants of man in the tilling of the earth. The actantial relations can be summarized in the following model:



#### 4. *The contribution of subject 2 to the narrative transformation*

When the actions of subject 1 (YHWH God) are compared with those of subject 2 (man), it is immediately obvious that  $S_1$  is never modalized but immediately proceeds to realization, whereas the modalization of  $S_2$  is very extensive. Moreover, there is something else which is rather striking in  $S_2$ : the objects of value which  $S_2$  acquires at the beginning, the garden, food and food of the tree of life, are lost at the end. Of the six objects of value which  $S_2$  has acquired at the end of Gen 2-3, four are competencies: knowledge of good and bad, awareness of nakedness, the procreative capacity and mortality, all of which will not be translated into performances until the following textual units Gen 4ff. The fifth and most important object of value is the earth, and although all the conditions for the acquisition of this object of value have been fulfilled, the actual acquisition does not take place in Gen 2-3. Clothing, the sixth and last object of value, has been acquired, but it does not seem to be so much an object of value in itself as a condition for the tilling of the earth. The preceding can be summarized in the following conclusions:

(a) Gen 2-3 deals with the possibilities or competencies of the subject man, who acquires them partly as a result of contracts and partly as a result of his own actions. In this sense it is the modalization of this subject which takes up a central position rather than the realization.

(b) The realization of these competencies of  $S_2$  is largely absent in Gen 2-3: it is only in the following textual units that  $S_2$  translates these competences into actions, into actual realizations.

(c) There is therefore little glorification of these realizations in the text; only the acquisition of the procreative capacity is explicitly and positively evaluated by man.

The actions of  $S_2$ , described in auxiliary programmes and independent narrative programmes, bring about transformations which, taken together, form a whole. These transformations turn out to follow naturally from what has been called the reverse of the actions of YHWH God. For by eating the forbidden food man acquires new competencies which make a permanent tilling of the earth possible. In figure 4 all the actions of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  (as well as the other subject actants) are arranged in auxiliary programmes, basic narrative programmes and a main narrative programme. This figure shows that  $NP_3$  is a condition for  $NP_2$ ,  $NP_2$  is a condition for  $NP_1$  and  $NP_1$  is a condition for  $MNP$ . Because YHWH God expels man from the garden and gives him the procreative capacity and mortality ( $NP_1$ ), man can till the earth permanently ( $MNP$ ). Because man acquires knowledge of good and bad and awareness of his nakedness ( $NP_2$ ), he acquires the capacity to produce offspring. And because man eats of the forbidden food ( $NP_3$ ), he acquires the knowledge of good and bad and the

awareness of his nakedness ( $NP_2$ ). Figure 4 reveals the hierarchic order of the narrative programmes which contribute to the transformations in Gen 2–3 and which together determine the narrative transformation.

### 5.3.3 Subject 3: Male Man

#### 1. *The installation of subject 3*

There is no installation of  $S_3$  ֿ. This subject is presented to the reader in 2:23 without any introduction, so that the text appeals to knowledge which the reader already possesses. This narrative construction, in which a non-installed actant is used, can only be understood from a pragmatic perspective.

#### 2. *The actions of subject 3*

=Leaving father and mother=

(a)  $S_3$  is not modalized.

(b) The action described in 2:24 “Hence a man will leave his father and mother”, is slightly outside the narrative scope of the story because it assumes actants (father and mother) which do not occur in the rest of the story. This narrative construction can only be interpreted in the wider communicative context of enunciator or writer and enunciatee or reader. This appears from textual elements such as “therefore” (*alken*) which refers to an enunciator outside the text, and the imperfect tense “a man will leave” (*ya’azob*) which refers to behaviour which takes place outside the time sphere of the story. One may infer from this that  $S_3$  does not perform any actions within the narrative trajectory of the text, but rather functions in a pragmatic programme outside the text.

(c) –

=Clinging to and becoming one flesh=

(a) /to want to/, /to be able to/ and /to know how to/ are all three acquired implicitly because  $S_3$  and  $S_4$ , man and woman, have the same origin and both are made of the same matter or substance, so the basis of their becoming one is given.

(b) –

(c) –

#### 3. *The actantial relations of subject 3*

$S_3$  ֿ, appearing in this general form and without an article in 2:23–24,

plays no part as a subject of action within the narrative development of the story. In the rest of the story only man or human being (*ha-adam*) are mentioned, or this particular man in relation to his wife (*išah, išek*).

#### 4. *The contribution of subject 3 to the narrative transformation*

*iš* performs actions in Gen 2-3 and is therefore a subject-actant, but his acting has no meaning for the narrative trajectory or transformation of the story. It only functions within the pragmatic programme, which is not restricted to the narrated time, but also considers the time and situation of the communicative context between enunciator and enunciatee.

### 5.3.4 Subject 4: Woman

#### 1. *The installation of subject 4*

The installation of  $S_4$  is announced by the statement that man needs a corresponding helpmate *ezer kenegdo* (2:18). The realization and glorification of this installation is described at great length in 2:21-23.

#### 2. *The actions of subject 4*

=Speaking=

(a) -

(b) In 3:2 woman  $S_4$  addresses the serpent and in 3:13 she addresses YHWH God.

(c) -

=Eating of the forbidden food=

(a) /have not to/: By means of contract 3 man  $S_2$  is obliged not to eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. In the dialogue between woman  $S_4$  and serpent  $S_6$  (3:1-6) this occurs again in indirect speech:  $S_4$  takes over the role of subject from  $S_2$  and as a result contract 3 also holds for  $S_4$ . This contract or prohibition of food is in 3:1 extended to all trees by the serpent and in 3:3 reinforced by woman by a prohibition to touch. Moreover /have not to/ is underlined because woman repeats the sanction (3:3). On the other hand we have a downtoning of the sanction by the serpent (3:4-5) so that the possibility of eating arises nevertheless. The result of this is that  $S_4$  does not acquire the modality /not to have to eat/.

/to want to/: In 3:6 three reasons are mentioned why  $S_4$  wants to eat: a functional reason, for the forbidden food is good to eat, an aesthetic

reason, for the food is attractive to look at, and a cognitive reason, for it is desirable to gain insight. In this way  $S_4$  acquires the modality /to want to eat/ and consequently becomes an autodestructor.

/to be able to/: Because of the spatial conjunction with the tree in the middle of the garden, viz. the tree of the knowledge of good and bad with the help of the serpent, which functions in the actantial role of an adjuvant,  $S_4$  is able to eat of this tree.

/to know how to/:  $S_4$  acquires knowledge of the eating through YHWH God, the serpent, and her own insight.

(b) In 3:6 woman  $S_4$  acquires the forbidden food  $O_4$ . This acquisition is represented in auxiliary programme  $AP_4$  which serves  $NP_3$  (man acquiring the forbidden food):

$$\begin{aligned} F_{S_4} &\Rightarrow [(S_4 \vee O_4) \rightarrow (S_4 \wedge O_4)] \\ \text{AP4: } F_{\text{woman}} &\Rightarrow [(woman \vee \text{forbidden food}) \\ &\rightarrow (woman \wedge \text{forbidden food})] \end{aligned}$$

(c) –

=Acquiring the procreative capacity=

(a) /to have to/: In 3:16 YHWH God offers contract 4 to  $S_4$ .

/to be able to/: The transgression of the prohibition ( $NP_3$ ) has resulted in man's ( $S_2$ ) acquisition of the knowledge of good and bad and an awareness of nakedness ( $NP_2$ ). This narrative programme  $NP_2$  forms the condition or creates the possibility for the acquisition of the procreative capacity by  $S_4$ .

/to know how to/: In 3:20  $S_4$  is given a new name: *hawwa*. This name makes it clear that  $S_2$  and  $S_4$  know that  $S_4$  can produce offspring.

Whereas /to have to/ indicates especially the negative aspects of producing offspring, the pain and the effort, and whereas /to be able to/ expresses a fairly neutral attitude, /to know how to/ expresses the positive aspect in particular.

(b) In 3:16 YHWH God ( $S_A$ ) enables  $S_4$  ( $S_S$ ) to acquire the capacity to produce offspring. This is represented in the auxiliary programme  $AP_6$  which serves part of  $NP_1$  (man acquires the capacity to produce offspring):

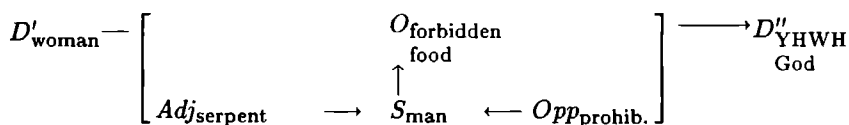
$$\begin{aligned} F_{S_1} &\Rightarrow [(S_4 \vee O_8) \rightarrow (S_4 \wedge O_8)] \\ \text{AP6: } F_{YHWH} &\Rightarrow [(woman \vee \text{procreative capacity}) \\ &\rightarrow (woman \wedge \text{procreative capacity})] \end{aligned}$$

(c) The glorification of this acquisition is to be found in 3:20, in which the

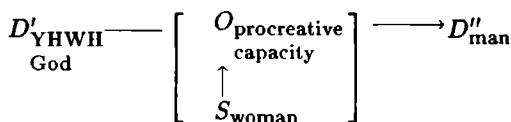
giving of the name *hawwa* to  $S_4$  expresses a positive appreciation.

### 3. The actantial relations of subject 4

Woman acts as the destinator in the acquisition of the forbidden food and as the subject in the acquisition of the procreative capacity. In eating of the forbidden food woman is both the autodesinator, because she has the will to eat and does eat, and the destinator of  $S_2$ , because she sees to it that  $S_2$  eats of this food. This unique (auto)destinatorship of  $S_4$  is the pivot of the transformation in Gen 2–3, which is why the functional, aesthetic and cognitive basis of this destinatorship gets full attention in 3:6. YHWH God is the destinee of the action of  $S_2$  which is incited by  $S_4$ : he judges the eating of the forbidden food in a negative way. This can be represented in the following actantial model



In the acquisition of the procreative capacity on the other hand, woman appears as the subject, whose acting is brought about by the destinator YHWH God. Man is the destinee of this acting: he is the receiver of the acquisition of the procreative capacity of woman. This can be represented in the following actantial model:



### 4. The contribution of $S_4$ to the narrative transformation.

The actions of woman contribute to the general narrative transformation in two ways. The acquisition of the forbidden food  $O_4$  by woman ensures that man  $S_2$  acquires this forbidden food. So the acting of  $S_4$  is an auxiliary programme  $AP_4$  on behalf of  $NP_3$  (see the formulas mentioned earlier). The acquisition of the procreative capacity  $O_8$  by woman ensures that man  $S_2$  acquires this capacity. This action can be seen as auxiliary programme  $AP_6$  in the service of  $NP_2$  (see the formulas mentioned earlier). These two actions show that  $S_4$  receives on the one hand an object of value  $O_4$ , and on the other hand  $S_2$  acquires a competence because  $S_4$  acquires the capacity to bring forth children. It is characteristic of Gen 2–3 that  $S_4$ ,

although she acquires this competence, does not actually translate it into performance. This does not happen until Gen 4:1.

### 5.3.5 Dual subject 5: Man and Wife / Woman and Husband

#### 1. The installation of subject 5

In verses 2:23–24 the installation of the dual subject takes place: man and his wife or woman and her husband. For it is in these verses that it is stated that both are made of the same material (flesh and bones) and unite to become one flesh. Also the action described in 2:25–3:7 indicates that we are dealing with a dual subject and it is proved by the plural verb forms.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, in the first and last appearances of this subject  $S_5$ , the togetherness which is characteristic of  $S_5$  is underlined by the phrase “the two of them” *šenehem* in 2:25 and 3:7. The subjects in Gen 2–3 alternate as follows. In 2:15–23 there is only one human subject,  $S_2$  man. In 2:25–3:8 the dual subject  $S_5$  appears both directly in the story and in the dialogue between the serpent and woman, so that in fact there are three subjects:  $S_4$ ,  $S_5$  and  $S_6$ . In 3:9–24 the dual subject has disappeared again and  $S_2$  and  $S_4$  appear either on their own (3:–21) or  $S_2$  appears as general subject in which  $S_5$  is contained (3:22–24).

#### 2. The actions of subject 5

=Acquiring knowledge of good and bad; becoming aware of nakedness=

(a) By eating of the forbidden food ( $AP_4$ ) and ( $NP_3$ ) “the eyes of both of them were opened” (3:7).  $S_4$  and  $S_2$  acquire the knowledge of good and bad and awareness of nakedness, not separately but together. It is the dual subject  $S_5$  which acquires these objects of value.  $AP_4$  and  $NP_3$  provide  $S_5$  with the conditions or modalities for the conjunction relation with  $O_6$  the knowledge of good and bad and  $O_7$  awareness of nakedness.  
(b) The actual acquisition of  $O_6$  and  $O_7$  is mentioned in 3:7: “Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they became aware of their nakedness; they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves aprons.”  $S_5$  is the first to acquire  $O_6$  and  $O_7$ , and the acquisition by  $S_2$  of these objects is a result of that. In other words, the acquisition of  $O_6$  and  $O_7$  by  $S_5$  is an auxiliary programme  $AP_5$  of  $NP_2$  (man acquires  $O_6$  and  $O_7$ ).

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<sup>1</sup> *tokelu* (3:1), *nokel* (3:2), *tokelu* (3:3), *tigge'u* (3:3), *temutun* (3:3,4), *nıpqeħu* (3:5), *wıhyntem* (3:5), *yode'e* (3:5), *wa-tıppaqahna* (3:7), *wa-yede'u* (3:7), *wa-yıtperu* (3:7), *wa-ya'asu* (3:7), *wa-yıšme'u* (3:8), *wa-yıthabbe* (3:8).



$$F_{S_5} \Rightarrow [(S_5 \vee O_6 \ 7) \rightarrow (S_5 \wedge O_6 \ 7)]$$

$$\text{AP5: } F_{\text{dual subject}} \Rightarrow [(\text{dual subject} \vee \text{knowledge,awareness}) \\ \rightarrow (\text{dual subject} \wedge \text{knowledge,awareness})]$$

(c) –

### 3. The actantial relations of subject 5

The actantial role of the dual subject is visible to the reader in the numerous plural verb forms. This dual subject is offered to the reader in a rather matter-of-fact way, even though it only performs actions in 3:1–8 and does not occur anywhere else in Genesis. With YHWH God's appearance in 3:9 the togetherness of  $S_2$  and  $S_4$ , which forms the basis for  $S_5$ , disappears. In 3:9f  $S_2$  and  $S_4$  are addressed separately and they respond independently of each other. The autodestinatorship of  $S_5$  has now disappeared for good as well and the absolute destinatorship of YHWH God is established.

### 4. The contribution of subject 5 to the narrative transformation

Unlike  $S_2$  ( $S_3$ ) and  $S_4$ , all realizations of the actions of  $S_5$  are recorded in Gen 2–3. This is a result of the fact that the dual subject only occurs in Gen 2–3, and even then it appears only in that part of Gen 2–3 in which transformation takes place (3:1–8). So the concern here is not with an establishment of the possibilities of the subject with a view to the subsequent development of the story, as was the case with  $S_2$  and  $S_4$ , but with the narrative function of  $S_5$  in Gen 2–3. From a narrative point of view  $S_5$  is necessary because  $S_2$  as a single subject cannot acquire an awareness of nakedness. For the acquisition of  $O_6$  and  $O_7$  a dual subject is needed, because only two people together can become aware of their nakedness and its sexual implications. This acquisition of  $S_5$  forms an auxiliary programme  $AP_5$  for  $NP_2$ , the acquisition of the knowledge of good and bad and an awareness of nakedness by  $S_2$  (see the formula represented earlier). Together with  $S_4$   $S_5$  ensures the transformation in the story, because they provide the conditions which enable  $S_2$  (man) to acquire the forbidden food ( $NP_3$ ), and the knowledge of good and bad and the awareness of nakedness ( $NP_2$ ).

## 5.3.6 Subject 6: Serpent

### 1. The installation of subject 6

The installation of  $S_6$  on the one hand takes place indirectly in 2:19–20,

because all the animals are created by  $S_1$  in these verses and given to  $S_2$  to support him, and on the other hand directly, because it is explicitly mentioned in 3:1 that the serpent was created by YHWH God and created *arum* shrewd.

## 2. *The actions of subject 6*

=Speaking interpretatively=

(a) /to want to/: The autodestinatorship of  $S_6$  is present right from the start.

/to be able to/:  $S_6$  is as a result of his shrewd, able to speak interpretatively.

/to know how to/: As a result of his innate shrewd  $S_6$  possesses certain knowledge.

(b) In 3:4–5 these interpreting actions of the serpent take place: it is not merely an offering of information but is also meant to be manipulating.

(c) –

## 3. *The actantial relations of subject 6*

The serpent plays an important role in the breaking of contract 3. Possessing specific knowledge  $S_6$  is able to translate the /to have to/ of contract 3 into a /have not to/. Without becoming a destinator himself,  $S_6$  obstructs the destinatorship of YHWH God. With the help of the serpent  $S_4$  becomes the autodestinator and so the serpent can be labelled an adjuvant of  $S_4$ . It is this very adjuvantship of an autonomous subject, that is to say a subject which acts independently of YHWH God, which is punished and instead of a helper and friend he becomes an opponent and enemy.

The choice of the serpent as an adjuvant points to the pragmatic dimension of the story. This choice is partly determined by the situation in the ancient Middle East in which the enunciator and enunciatee live. It is on the basis of the symbolic value of the serpent at that time and in that place that the serpent can have its narrative function.

## 4. *The contributions of subject 6 to the narrative transformation*

The serpent only appears as an adjuvant of  $S_4$  and does not independently execute an auxiliary or a basic narrative programme. The acting of  $S_6$  creates conditions for the auxiliary programme  $AP_4$  (woman acquires the forbidden food).

### 5.3.7 Subject 7: Earth

#### 1. The installation of subject 7

The earth *adama*  $S_7$  is installed at the same time as the world *erets*, because the *adama* is part of the *erets*: the arable earth or soil. The *adama* is installed empty, without vegetation, but with conditions which make life possible.

#### 2. The actions of subject 7

=Acquiring water=

(a) /to have to/: The *erets*, as well as the *adama* as part of it, needs water. It is not a narrative destinator who gives this /to have to/, but an enunciator outside the story. The enunciator (author) and enunciatee (reader) know from their own experience that the earth needs water to produce crops.

/to be able to/: The earth can acquire water by means of auxiliary programme  $AP_1$  (2:6). Furthermore, a river flows out of the garden of Eden which branches off into four subsidiaries which supply the earth with water (2:10–14). This is represented in  $AP_2$

$$\begin{aligned} AP1: \quad & F_{S_8} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_2) \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_2)] \\ & F_{flood} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee water) \rightarrow (earth \wedge water)] \end{aligned}$$

$$\begin{aligned} AP2: \quad & F_{S_9} \Rightarrow [(S_9 \vee O_{11}) \rightarrow (S_9 \wedge O_{11})] \\ & F_{river} \Rightarrow [(river \vee garden, earth) \\ & \quad \rightarrow (river \wedge garden, earth)] \end{aligned}$$

/to know how to/: This modality is taken to be implied.

(b) The realization of the acquisition of water by the earth can be derived from 2:6 and 2:10–14.

(c) -

=Acquiring man=

(a) /to have to/: It appears from 2:5b that the earth needs man: “because there was no man to till the earth”.

/to be able to/: in order to be able to acquire man, a spatial conjunction has to exist between  $S_7$  and  $O_{12}$  (man). In the *MNP* YHWH God expels man from the garden to the earth outside the garden and because

of this  $S_7$  can acquire  $O_{12}$ . Apart from the main narrative programme other narrative programmes of Gen 2-3 also contribute to the acquisition of man by the earth and of the earth by man.

/to know how to/: even though it is odd to speak of the earth  $S_7$  as having knowledge, from a narrative viewpoint one could say that  $S_7$  implicitly possesses knowledge.

(b) Although the conditions for the acquisition of man by  $S_7$  are present, its realization is not found in Gen 2-3. Later in Gen 4:1-16 this realization does take place.

(c) -

### 3. *The actantial relations of subject 7*

Because of the position of  $S_7$  at the beginning and end of Gen 2-3, and because of the close link between man and earth,  $S_7$  occupies an important place within the development of the story. Even though from a quantitative point of view the actions of  $S_7$  are limited, from a qualitative point of view  $S_7$  is of great importance. The earth  $S_7$  is a subject of state  $S_S$  in Gen 2-3 and not a subject of action  $S_A$ . That is to say,  $S_7$  does not acquire the objects of value water ( $O_2$ ) and man ( $O_{12}$ ) on its own, but only through the actions of other subjects. The earth virtually acquires man as an object, but the realization of this acquisition does not occur in Gen 2-3. YHWH God as destinator provides the impulse for this virtual acquisition. The earth is not only the subject, but also the destinee of the acquisition of man by the earth. This can be represented in the following actantial model:

$$D'_{\text{God}} \longrightarrow \left[ \begin{array}{c} O_{\text{man}} \\ \uparrow \\ S_{\text{earth}} \end{array} \right] \longrightarrow D''_{\text{earth}}$$

### 4. *The contribution of subject 7 to the narrative transformation*

$S_7$  does not contribute to the narrative transformation as  $S_A$  but as  $S_S$ . As a result of the virtual acquisition of man,  $S_7$  is part of the main narrative programme which has YHWH God as subject of action and destinator. The water supply of  $AP_1$  and  $AP_2$  are in the service of this part of the main programme.

### 5.3.8 Subject 8: Flood

#### 1. *The installation of subject 8*

#### 2. *The actions of subject 8*

There is no installation of *ed* flood ( $S_8$ ).  $S_8$  is not modalized for the two actions performed viz. to well up from the earth and to make the surface of the earth moist.  $S_8$  performs these actions without previous modalization in the verses 2:6a and 2:6b respectively. There is no glorification of these actions.

#### 3. *The actantial relations of subject 8*

The acting of  $S_8$  is very limited and serves the earth which brings forth plants. As there is no installation and modalization of  $S_8$ , the significance and function for the intended reader is apparently known.  $S_8$  acts independently of YHWH God and consequently appears as an autodestructor.

#### 4. *The contribution of subject 8 to the narrative transformation*

$S_8$  makes the surface of the earth moist and so executes an auxiliary programme  $AP_1$  which is in the service of the main narrative programme: the tilling of the earth by man.

$$\begin{array}{l} AP_1: \quad F_{S_8} \Rightarrow [(S_7 \vee O_2) \rightarrow (S_7 \wedge O_2)] \\ \quad \quad F_{flood} \Rightarrow [(earth \vee water) \rightarrow (earth \wedge water)] \end{array}$$

### 5.3.9 Subject 9: River

#### 1. *The installation of subject 9*

#### 2. *The actions of subject 9*

There is no installation of  $S_9$ . There is no modalization for the actions performed by  $S_9$ , viz. leaving the garden, irrigating the garden and branching out.  $S_9$  performs these actions without any modalization in 2:10–14. There is no glorification.

#### 3. *The actantial relations of subject 9*

$S_9$  performs the actions entirely autonomously. YHWH God is not mentioned as a destinator.  $S_9$  is an autodestructor and a subject acting autonomously.

#### 4. The contribution of subject 9 to the narrative transformation

The profuse irrigation of the garden of  $S_9$  functions as an auxiliary programme  $AP_2$  in the tilling of the garden by man ( $NP_1$ ). But as the river provides not only the garden with water but branches out over the earth (2:11–14), this programme is at the same time an auxiliary programme for the tilling of the earth ( $MNP$ ).

$$F_{S_9} \Rightarrow [(S_9 \vee O_{1.11}) \rightarrow (S_9 \wedge O_{1.11})]$$

$$AP2: \quad F_{river} \Rightarrow [(river \vee garden, earth) \rightarrow (river \wedge garden, earth)]$$

### 5.4 Conclusion of the narrative analysis

#### 5.4.1 Conclusive Remarks

The actions of the subject-actants, which were initially described separately, appear to be closely linked in narrative programmes. *Figure 3* shows in a tree diagram the relation of these programmes, varying from auxiliary programmes,  $AP_1$  to  $AP_9$ , basic narrative programmes,  $NP_1$ ,  $NP_2$  and  $NP_3$ , and a main narrative programme,  $MNP$ . In *figure 4* the narrative structure of Gen 2–3 is represented as one large transformation, in which the actions of  $S_1$  and  $S_2$  are the main components and those of  $S_4$ ,  $S_5$ ,  $S_8$  and  $S_9$  the subsidiary components. These figures more or less form a summary of the narrative analysis of Gen 2:4b–3:24, which is here presented. A few conclusions can be formulated with respect to the two major subject-actants in Gen 2–3: YHWH God and man.

The actions of  $S_1$  YHWH God are two-sided in nature, or rather they form a two-track policy. The track consisting of the garden with man as a tiller is the more immediately striking of the two and therefore it would seem to be the main track. The track of the earth outside the garden with man as its tiller is less striking, but is directly present in 2:4b–5, 3:17–19 and 3:22–23 and indirectly present in 2:17 and 2:18–25. Contrary to what one would think at first sight, the main narrative programme in Gen 2–3 is the acting of YHWH God as it bears on the relation man – earth. This  $MNP$  forms the framework for the text. It is announced at the beginning of the text in a verse by the narrator and at the end it is recorded as the final concluding action of YHWH God. Furthermore, in the intermediate

episode in the garden, YHWH God on his own and as a completely autonomous and competent subject or destinator

(a) made the tree of the knowledge of good and bad

(b) issued the prohibition to eat of this tree and in doing so introduced a negative aspect into what was until then positive

(c) named death as a possibility in a situation in which man had only been acquainted with life

(d) made help for man and, from the perspective of the end of the text, this help turns out to be not so much a help for tilling the garden, but rather for transgressing the prohibition and for a permanent tilling of the earth

(e) created the serpent as an animal and as a possessor of knowledge which is made to serve the transgression of the prohibition.

The second track in the acting of YHWH God consequently turns out to be the main track and is geared to the tilling of the earth by man.

The actions of  $S_2$  man appears to follow from this second track of YHWH God. By transgressing the prohibition,  $S_2$  acquires the competencies of the knowledge of good and bad and the awareness of nakedness. These form the conditions for the competencies of procreative capacity and mortality, for clothing and expulsion from the garden and, ultimately, for the tilling of the earth outside the garden by man.

This can be summarized as follows:

Although the situation at the  
beginning is characterized

by a deficiency ( $\bar{A}$ )

$earth \vee man; man \vee earth$

and the story in the garden

begins with a new situation

without a deficiency ( $B$ ),

$man \wedge garden$

YHWH God himself, by introducing

the negation in this new

situation, has created the

possibility for  $\bar{B}$ ;

through man's actions  $B$  is actu-

ally transformed into  $\bar{B}$ ,

$man \vee garden$

which occasions YHWH God to

extend this negation

into situation  $A$ :

$man \wedge earth; earth \wedge man$

So the narrative development is as follows:

$$\bar{A} \rightarrow B \rightarrow \bar{B} \rightarrow A$$

This dynamic development of the plot is based on a static narrative arrangement which determines the actantial relations. The relations can be represented in the following actantial models:

actantial models of $MNP$ :	$D'_{YHWH}$ God	$\rightarrow$	$O_{man}$	$\rightarrow$	$D''_{earth}$
			$\uparrow$ $S_{earth}$		
	$D'_{YHWH}$ God	$\rightarrow$	$O_{earth}$	$\rightarrow$	$D''_{man}$
			$\uparrow$ $S_{man}$		
actantial model of $NP_1$ :	$D'_{YHWH}$ God	$\rightarrow$	$O_{garden}$ procreative cap. mortality	$\rightarrow$	$D''_{man}$
			$\uparrow$ $S_{man}$		
actantial model of $NP_2$ :	$D'_{dual}$ subject	$\rightarrow$	$O_{knowledge}$ awareness	$\rightarrow$	$D''_{YHWH}$ God
			$\uparrow$ $S_{man}$		
actantial model of $NP_3$ :	$D'_{woman}$	$\rightarrow$	$O_{forbidden}$ food	$\rightarrow$	$D''_{YHWH}$ God
			$\uparrow$ $S_{man}$		



### 5.4.2 The Narrative Analysis in a Pragmatic Perspective

The narrative analysis of Gen 2–3 has two pragmatic dimensions. In order to understand the narrative structure, the reader first of all has to supplement that which the narrative structure takes for granted, and secondly he has to arrange the narrative elements in the text in a hierarchical narrative network. These two essential contributions by the reader or the analyst cause the narrative analysis to be situated within a pragmatic framework. To conclude this narrative analysis a description of these two contributions by the reader will now follow.

The first contribution by the reader concerns the subject-actants. In order to be able to understand the actions of the subjects in Gen 2–3 the reader has to fill in a few narrative gaps. These contributions by the reader are summarized as follows.

From the description of the actions of  $S_1$ , YHWH God, it appears that the reader is assumed to know beforehand of the existence and competence of  $S_1$ . The reader who wants to follow the narrative structure has to supplement the text and see YHWH God as an autonomous and supremely competent subject and as a destinator who directly or indirectly determines the actions of the other subject-actants. Only in this way can the reader interpret the actions of the other subjects against the background of this omnipotent subject and destinator.

The actions of  $S_2$ , man, often demand specific supplementing by the reader. The tilling of the garden and of the earth presuppose a reader who takes it for granted that  $S_2$  knows how to till the garden and the earth. Furthermore, it is supposed that the reader takes for granted the fact that a garden should be guarded, even though the text offers no reason to assume that the garden needs protection against other people or animals. In other words, the reader has to supplement the text from his own experience. In order to be able to interpret the narrative elements that man must become aware of his own nakedness before he can bring forth children, and that he cannot acquire that awareness on his own but only as a dual subject, and that in order to produce offspring two subjects man and woman are again essential, the reader has to supply elements from his own experience.

The reader can only understand the installation of  $S_3$ , man, in 2:24 when he interprets the text from his own experience of life. What a man is, what a father and mother are, that a man leaves his father and mother, all this he cannot find in the text, but has to supplement himself.

In order to understand the actions of  $S_4$ , woman, the text assumes that the reader knows that woman becomes pregnant and bears children and that man and woman must be aware of their nakedness, in this case their differences, as a preliminary to this procreative process. The reader has to supplement the text with this knowledge.

The installation and action of  $S_5$ , the dual subject, takes place without any narrative introduction in 3:1-8. The reader must supplement these verses from his own knowledge and know that only two people together can become awareness of their nakedness and its sexual dimension. The text elaborates on the reader's knowledge.

The choice of  $S_6$ , the serpent, as a speaking animal possessing knowledge assumes that the reader accepts that the serpent can function as a narrative adjuvant with this knowledge. Therefore the reader has to contribute to the narrative contents of Gen 2-3 by means of information about the mythological context of the ancient Middle East.

The narrative role of  $S_7$ , the earth, can only be understood by the reader if he shares the presupposition of the text that the supply of water is an essential requirement for the earth. The reader has to understand this anxiety about a shortage of water from his own experience (a Dutch reader would perhaps sooner think of land reclamation or dike reinforcement and consequently a surplus of water rather than a shortage) in order to be able to interpret the text. The same is also true for the fact that man has to work hard on earth to make the earth yield crops.

The acting of  $S_8$ , the flood, which is entirely independent of the destinator YHWH God, presupposes a contribution on the part of the reader based on certain mythological foreknowledge.

To be able to understand the narrative function of  $S_9$ , the river, the reader has to supplement the text with specific geographical foreknowledge.

The actions of the subject, therefore, presuppose continually that the reader will fill in the narrative gaps in the text. The narrative strategy obliges the reader to follow the actions of the subjects or narrative programmes and at the same time demands that the reader makes a personal contribution to fill in the narrative gaps.

The second contribution the reader has to make to be able to understand the narrative structure is arranging the narrative lines. Any narrative text consists of a variety of narrative lines. The tree diagram of figure 3 shows the many lines (the conjunction or disjunction relations of a subject with an object) of Gen 2-3. These narrative lines derive their identity from that which distinguishes them from the other lines, discontinuity, and from that which links them in the narrative structure, continuity. The essential characteristic of a narrative analysis is that the reader or analyst either consciously or unconsciously chooses a particular continuity on the basis of discontinuities. This is done by arranging the narrative lines in a hierarchical structure or network. One programme forms the main narrative programme in this network and the others are subordinated to this main programme in various gradations.

Any text, and therefore Gen 2-3 also, contains a narrative strategy which on the one hand peremptorily presents a limited number of narrative lines and programmes to the reader and on the other hand asks the reader less peremptorily to arrange the lines into a narrative network. In this case the reader has a certain freedom which, though not unlimited, is fairly large. This is proved by the differences in the interpretations of Gen 2-3 either as the fall, in which  $NP_3$  is interpreted as a main programme, or as the story about the relation man – earth, with  $MNP$  as main programme. The construction of a narrative network always demands self-activation and choices on the part of the reader. In other words any narrative interpretation contains apart from inductive (empirical) and deductive (logical), also abductive or hypothetical elements.

As a result the pragmatic perspective of the narrative analysis is two-fold. In order to read a narrative text the reader, exegete or text analyst must make a contribution to the text by filling in the gaps and by arranging the actions of the subject actants in narrative programmes and a hierarchical narrative network.

## 6. THE SEMANTIC ANALYSIS

### 6.1 Introduction

#### 6.1.1 Semantic Analysis as Part of Semiotic Analysis

Apart from the expression forms, which offer a first orientation to the reader and the narrative arrangement, which enables the reader to follow the structure and development of a story, it is possible to distinguish in a text a semantic structure, which ensures that the reader can attach definite meanings to the textual elements. This third strategy makes the reader assign meaning and lines of meaning on the basis of connections and distinctions in the text. The narrative structure together with the semantic arrangement form the so-called semio-narrative structures. A text presents these semio-narrative structures in such a way that the reader in turn will relate a coherent set of meanings to it which he places over the text like a network. This activity on the part of the reader can be described as relating (*Rel*) the expression forms (*Exp*) to narrative and semantic content forms (*Cont*): *Exp Rel Cont*.<sup>1</sup> In a narrative analysis the relation of the linguistic signs to a narrative content is studied, whereas a semantic analysis is concerned with the connection of the linguistic signs with ideas or conceptual contents.

As with the preceding parts of the analysis, the present semantic analysis concentrates on the network which the "intended reader" has to place over or link with the text. This reader should be distinguished from the traditional exegete in two respects. As a result of his philological training, a traditional exegete will turn his attention directly to the elements of meaning and ignore or neglect the narrative structure. As a result of his training in tradition and redaction criticism, he will concentrate on the irregularities of the text and on the basis of these irregularities he will separate the text into parts dating from different historical periods.<sup>2</sup> The intended reader on the other hand very much starts from the entire text as he finds it and he interprets it on the basis of the expression forms, the narrative development and the elements of meaning in their mutual relations.

The three steps in the reader's interpretation, based on the expression-forms, the narrative development and the structure of elements of meaning,

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<sup>1</sup> For this formulation see: Barthes (1964b: 130-132) and Eco (1976:55-57), who are both inspired in their formulations by Hjelmslev (1943).

<sup>2</sup> See all the commentaries on Genesis or articles on Gen 2-3: the greater majority of them proceed in the way described above.

result in a network of meaning, described as *Exp Rel Cont*. Together they constitute the first more or less complete part of the reader's interpretation, which corresponds with the strategic generation of semio-narrative structures of the text. This first part of the interpretation is to a large extent determined by the character or definitions of the text. To another extent it is dependent on the reader's activities, such as supplementation and arrangement into structures.

In the next phase of the interpretation process this network takes on the role of carrier of a second or connotative network of meaning for the reader. Together the elements of meaning form a whole which evokes a new process of interpretation on the part of the reader. This process may entail the reader identifying with or dissociating himself from narrative actants, from contents or viewpoints. The reader may also interpret the text as referring to an extra-textual world or as an incitement to a certain type of behaviour. So the reader, in this second instance of the interpretation process, expands the initial network of meaning. He adds a second content to the first relations (*Rel*) between expressions (*Exp*) and narrative and semantic contents (*Cont*): *Exp Rel Cont* becomes (*Exp Rel Cont*) *Rel Cont*. This second network of meaning can become the carrier of another meaning for the reader and can be represented as ((*Exp Rel Cont*) *Rel Cont*) *Rel Cont*.

In this way the reader can interpret the text over and over again and continually place new networks of meaning over the text. The reader's contribution to the interpretation of the text becomes more prominent, while the prescriptive influence of the text diminishes. This pattern can also be detected in the present analysis of Gen 2-3. In the narrative and semantic analysis attention is paid to the definitions of the text and the supplementing activities of the reader. In the subsequent discursive analysis the reader's own contribution to the realization of a connotative network of meaning will occupy an even more important position.

### **6.1.2 The Semantic Analysis as Analysis of an Interaction Process**

The above shows that a semantic analysis consists of two components, text and reader, which belong together like the recto and verso side of a sheet of paper. The first component, the text, consists of elements which have a certain meaning, because they proceed from the linguistic and cultural codes in which the text came into being, and because of their mutual relations in the textual context. For these textual elements have a certain meaning, value or identity because they are, in code and context, both different from and similar to each other. The reader, the second component, interprets, or rather, assigns meaning to a text by relating the textual elements to a. the linguistic and cultural codes, b. the other

elements that occur within a text and c. his own stream of interpretants which form the reflection of his previous reading experience and more general experience of life. For the reader, too, the following holds: the value or identity of the elements of meaning comes into being as a result of differences and relations.<sup>3</sup> In the same way as the elements of meaning possess an identity because of their relations in the text, so the reader assigns values or identifies by discerning relations or differences.

Most of the time the reader assigns values unconsciously and without a clear structure. An analysis however has to comply with different requirements, for in an analysis the interaction process between text and reader should be explicitly described in a responsible way, so that the result of the analysis can be checked. The following method of analysis is based on the semiotic insights of Greimas and Peirce, which will be briefly described. Probably some aspects will become (more) clear during the analysis itself.

A text makes use of a cultural code which, within the cultural context in which it is valid, makes distinctions, arrangements or differentiations. In the case of Gen 2-3 this is the Hebrew culture and language. In writing and editing this text the Hebrew cultural distinctions and categories are used, but they are given a specific definition. The reader of Gen 2-3 is confronted with the general distinctions by means of *classemes*,<sup>4</sup> which are repeated and thus form the general context of the story, the general basis of the lines of meaning or "isotopies" of a text. On the basis of what Peirce calls a "symbolic" (i.e. conventional) relation, the *classemes* function for the readers as signs or carriers of meaning. They derive their meaning not from a relation with the outside world or reality, but from internal relations within the linguistic and cultural codes, and in this way they present to the reader the more or less conventional or standardized contents.

Apart from the *classemes* which form the basis for the general contextual meaning, the individual or specific meaning is determined by kernel *semes*. The numerous kernel *semes* in a text ensure the specific interpretation of the isotopies or lines of meaning. Through the connection of several lines of meaning, which all consist of a general *classemic* basis and specific kernel *semic* contents, the text becomes a "texture" or textual fabric for

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<sup>3</sup> In other words the semantic analysis is part of a general semiotics in which knowledge is defined as the assigning of meaning to an object by a subject. The subject or reader assigns significance to the object or the text by means of linguistic and cultural codes and his individual stream of interpretants. Subject, object and code or signs are in this semiotic approach the three elements which cannot be reduced to each other but which are nonetheless inseparably linked.

<sup>4</sup> The word *classeme* already indicates that it involves *semes* or elements of meaning which belong to a general class or order.

the reader. In this texture the relations of *classemes* and *kernel semes* form a textual universe or network.<sup>5</sup> If the *classemic* component of the lines of meaning function for the reader on the basis of symbolic relations, the *kernel semic* components are carriers of meaning on the basis of symbolic relations combined and extended with, as Peirce called them, "iconic", i.e. similar or corresponding, relations. The reader does not only attach meaning to the linguistic signs by connecting them to the linguistic code, but also by relating these signs within the text both to each other and to his own knowledge and experience. The individuality of a text, its uniqueness and identity, arises because elements of meaning are placed in new combinations, so that relations and structures of meaning come into being which previously did not exist. A reader can grasp the individuality of a text by means of logical inferences, based on conventional and therefore already familiar relations (the symbolic aspect), and by means of analogical inferences which are founded on relations of similarity (the iconic aspect) and finally by means of logical inferences in which the analogical inferences are tested by comparing them with other textual elements and with the linguistic convention (the symbolic aspect). This interaction process between text and reader with its sequences of logical, analogical and logical inferences on the part of the reader in response to known and unknown combinations of textual elements, eventually leads to one coherent interpretation of the text. Now, the logical aspects of this interaction process will be studied by means of a semantic method of analysis which is inspired by the semiotic theory and method of Greimas; this method of analysis will be described in 6.1.3. The analogical aspects of this interaction process will be studied by means of a semantic method of analysis, which is inspired by the semiotic insights of Peirce; this method of analysis will be briefly described in 6.1.4.

### 6.1.3 The Analysis of the Logical Aspects

A first step in a semantic analysis is answering the question: what lines of meaning or isotopies are to be found in the text? Once the most important isotopies are distinguished, the *classemic* and *kernel semic* contents of each isotopy will have to be analysed. To determine the logical aspects of these contents the analyst will ask the question how the textual elements within one and the same isotopy are related to each other, in what sense they are mutually inclusive or exclusive, whether they are linked or separate.<sup>6</sup> Contrary to Greimas, in whose opinion lines of meaning are qualities of the

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<sup>5</sup> As has already been indicated: this is a first texture, a network of initial meanings which can develop at a later stage into a second network of meaning.

<sup>6</sup> In the history of Western philosophy from Aristotle until the present people have been trying to describe the similarities and differences between values or terms within

text which are followed by the reader and merely recognized and defined by the analyst, the following semiotic theory is based on the idea that meaning is the result of the interaction between text and reader. With respect to the semantic analysis this means that, following Greimas, three types of relations can be distinguished, viz. the contradictory, the contrary and the complementary relations, but at the same time these relations are considered to be the product of the interaction process between analyst and text.

If the analyst attaches meaning to textual elements and considers them as terms which do not only differ but are also mutually exclusive, he can describe the relation between them as contradictory. That is to say he arranges the textual elements as terms which are each other's opposites in the same way as white and white, poor and poor are each other's opposites.<sup>7</sup> So in this arrangement into contradictory relations the one value  $A$  is present when the other  $\bar{A}$  is absent.

If the analyst perceives textual elements or values which are different from each other, but are mutually inclusive, their relation can be regarded as contrary. That is to say, he arranges the elements of meaning as terms which are each other's opposites but which share a common "semantic axis" or basis of meaning. They are each other's opposites but the one presupposes the existence of the other, in the same way as white presupposes black, as poor presupposes rich or as poor presupposes rich. In the contrary relation one value ( $A$ ) may be present while another value ( $B$ ) is present also, and one value ( $\bar{A}$ ) may be absent while another ( $\bar{B}$ ) is absent as well. The difference between the contradictory and contrary relation is the following: when the analyst assigns meaning to textual elements and arranges them as contradictory terms, the elements form extremes between which no mediation or intermediate value is possible, in the same way as there is for example no intermediation possible between large and large. When the analyst assigns meaning to textual elements and arranges them as contrary terms, the elements form extremes between which there is an intermediate value possible, like for example the colour grey between black and white, or medium between small and large.

Finally, when the analyst assigns meaning to textual elements in such a way that the absence of one meaning is the condition for the presence

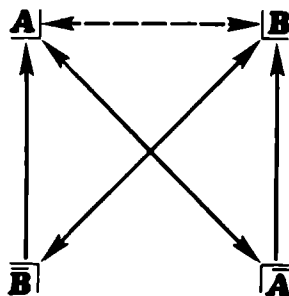
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structures of relations. Aristotle developed a logic in which binary opposition takes a central position. Porphyry described the relations between terms in a tree diagram. In the 20th century structuralists from the Prague, Copenhagen and Paris linguistic schools have described these relations as binary and quartary opposition structures. Greimas is an exponent of this tradition and his views form the basis of the following description of the system of values.

<sup>7</sup> A horizontal line above a word denotes the negation of this word. For example poor means not poor.



of the other meaning, then the analyst can call their relation a complementary or implication relation, represented as  $\bar{A}$  and  $B$  or  $\bar{B}$  and  $A$ . In the complementary relation the absence of the one element implies the presence of the other, as for example  $\bar{\text{rich}}$  implies poor, or  $\overline{\text{poor}}$  implies rich. By means of these three types of relations the analyst is able to demonstrate how textual elements are both related to and different from each other and how at the same time continuities and discontinuities may be described logically. The analyst is also able to show the correlation between the three types of relation by following Greimas and arranging them in one taxonomic structure and represent them in a "semiotic square".



A semiotic square makes visible how elements of meaning can be arranged by defining their mutual logical connections in a text. When the term "bachelor" ( $A$ ) occurs in a text, for example, the analyst can assume that the contrast with "married man" ( $B$ ) is immediately evoked and that  $\bar{\text{bachelor}}$  ( $A$ ) is absent. At the same time this term raises the possibility of a development in the plot in which the bachelor marries, so that a bachelor ( $A$ ) becomes a  $\bar{\text{bachelor}}$  ( $\bar{A}$ ) and a married man ( $B$ ). This does not only enable the analyst to assign a static taxonomy or value structure to the text, but also a dynamic dimension, which can be represented by an arrow in the semiotic square. This arrow can go from  $A$  to  $B$  via  $\bar{A}$ , or from  $B$  to  $A$  via  $\bar{B}$ , and is called a taxonomic arrow. This taxonomic arrow adds the dimension of chronology to a logical structure. In this way the contradictory, contrary and complementary relations, which are the result of an analysis of the textual elements, can be represented in a semiotic square which contains a static and a dynamic component.

The logical analysis of the relations of meaning in a text may seem a rather rigid and formal process, in which the text is reduced to an abstract logical structure, but this is not the purpose of a logical analysis. Here we are concerned with what could be termed "textual logic", a logic which

gives full scope to both the differentiations or variants of general and abstract oppositions as they occur in a narrative text, and the complexity of the text. A text is not exclusively determined by absolute oppositions such as those between life and death, good and bad or man and woman, but by a variety of intermediate positions. This means, for example, that it is possible not only to regard the relations between the extremes on one single semantic axis (such as life versus death) as contrary, but also the relations between terms such as eternal life versus temporary life, life *and* death versus life *or* death. This also means that the implication relations in a text are not only the relations between terms which of necessity mutually evoke or imply each other, but that also the relations between terms which supplement and complement each other in the text can be considered implication relations as well. "Textual logic" aims to do justice to the complexity of a text in another way too, for this is the purpose of the semiotic square which simultaneously indicates the three relations of contrariety, contradiction and complementariness. Nevertheless, the square occasionally fails to express the complexity of a text. As Greimas has acknowledged (Dict:32), the comparative research of Brøndal has shown that occasionally two other positions can be found in texts, next to the four positions  $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $\bar{A}$ ,  $\bar{B}$ , which are the complex ( $A + B$ ) and the neutral ( $\bar{A} + \bar{B}$ ) position. This means that it is possible to have, besides a square, a hexagon and possibly even an octagon (a hexagon supplemented with  $A + \bar{B}$  and  $\bar{A} + B$ )<sup>8</sup> as the analytical result of the complex structure of relations of a text. In other words, this form of textual logic does not intend to reduce the complexity of texts to a single dominant logical formalization, but wishes to allow the relations between terms and the correlations between the relations in a structure all possible room. The analysis of Gen 2-3 will be concerned with the complexity of this text and will represent the structure of relations in a square, the complex character of which will be discussed in notes.<sup>9</sup>

Application of the logical analytical instrument of Greimas is useful provided that the significance of the taxonomic structure and its representation in the semiotic square is not made an absolute. From a heuristic point of view its value is significant. It forces the analysis to define and describe the logical relations in a text more precisely. Apart from this the semiotic square makes it possible to summarize the extensive semantic analysis in one diagram. The static elements and their relations, as well

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<sup>8</sup> Greimas himself indirectly provides an example of an octagon (Dict:32):  $A$ : being,  $B$ : seeming,  $\bar{B}$ : seeming and  $\bar{A}$ : being; truth ( $A + B$ ), falsehood ( $\bar{A} + \bar{B}$ ), secret ( $A + \bar{B}$ ) and lie ( $\bar{A} + B$ ).

<sup>9</sup> For criticism on the semiotic square proceeding from the comparison with Peircean semiotics and the analysis itself, see the final section (6.7) of the present chapter.

as the dynamic development within these relations, can be clearly seen in this diagrammatic representation.

#### 6.1.4 The Analysis of the Analogical Aspects

An analyst should not only examine the symbolic or conventional relations on the basis of which the reader assigns logically connected meaning, but also the iconic or resemblant relations upon which the reader bases his analogical reasoning, i.e. his assignment of meaning to the text on the basis of analogies. Peirce's concept of iconicity enables the analyst to get a clearer understanding of the interaction process between text and reader, a process which on the one hand is based on the possibilities of the text and on the other on the active contribution of the reader.

Peirce speaks of iconic possibilities or iconic signs in a text. What does he mean by this? "I call a sign which stands for something merely because it resembles it, an icon." (CP 3.362) "A sign may be iconic, that is, may represent its object mainly by its similarity. (...) A particular shaping of meaning can function as a sign or carrier of meaning because of its inherent representational qualities. (...) Anything fit to be substitute for anything that it is like." (CP 2.276) The same characteristics always recur in Peirce's definitions and descriptions of an iconic sign: fit to/may/can, likeness/similarity/resemblance and substitute/represent/stand for or potentiality, resemblance and representation. Something may become an icon or a carrier of meaning for a person on the basis of its individual quality, which enables it to represent an object to which it is similar.<sup>10</sup> This resemblance is the basis for the analogical argumentations or inferences of the reader. By resemblance or analogy Peirce means either the similarity between two entities sharing one or several characteristics or qualities, or the similarity in the arrangement of qualities (CP 2.277).

Peirce discussed iconic signs in very general terms only. He was hardly concerned with the specific quality of linguistic signs. Nor did he give concrete expression to his abstract theory, or transform it into an analytical method. It is necessary therefore first of all to render Peirce's general theory in concrete terms. This may then serve to analyze the iconicity in a text as the basis of the analogical inferences of a reader.

With respect to linguistic signs it is possible to make a distinction between two types of iconicity or analogy (Haiman 1980). The first is the analogy the reader perceives between the linguistic signs or the arrange-

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<sup>10</sup> An icon only exists as an icon when someone sees it or interprets it as such: an object functions as an icon of something for someone. An object can function as an icon on the basis of convention (symbolic sign - conventional), because of its individual representative quality (iconic sign - potential), and because of a given relation with reality (indexical sign - referential).

ments of linguistic signs in the text and some aspects of (structures of) reality. The second is the analogy the reader perceives between the linguistic signs or the arrangements of linguistic signs in the text itself. The first type of iconicity may be called "iconicity by motivation", for the analogical inferences of the reader are determined by the (indirect) relations between (the arrangement of) textual signs and aspects of reality. With respect to a narrative text a distinction can be made between two forms of iconicity by motivation.

1. An iconic relation between the syntagmatic development or sequences of semantic contents in the narrative text and the linearity or sequences of events as evolving in time and reality.<sup>11</sup> The reader reads, for example, in a text the phrase: "The door was closed." He can decode this sentence by means of the linguistic code and understand what it says. But he knows also by experience that the possibility exists that a closed door may be opened, and this knowledge plays a part in his expectation with respect to the semantic development in the text. Another example, text A says: "She got married and got a baby." Text B says: "She got a baby and got married." Although the semantic contents of the two phrases in both texts are the same, the reader knows by means of the sequences of the phrases and his experience of life that something different is told. Consequently, the reader's interpretation of the semantic openness of words and of the syntagmatic arrangements of semantic contents is partly motivated by the correspondence existing between the sequences of events in reality and the syntagmatic sequences of contents in the text.

2. The second form of "iconicity by motivation" is the iconic relation existing between the paradigmatic values selected by the text and aspects of reality. In Gen 2-3, for example, the reader is confronted with an animal called serpent. To understand this text he has to know the existence of this animal, what it looks like, viz. that it is "naked" or that it has no furry skin, and that it crawls on his belly. If the reader does not know this, he loses a possibility to assign meaning to a part of the text. Another example, in Gen 2-3 the water supply of the garden and

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<sup>11</sup> The terms paradigmatic and syntagmatic were for the first time used by De Saussure and later adopted and (re)defined by many others. A well-known definition is the one made by R. Jakobson, who called the paradigmatic axis the axis of selection and the syntagmatic axis the axis of combination. R. Barthes has given an explanation of the terms "paradigmatic" and "syntagmatic" which may help to clarify their meaning. He draws a comparison with a menu. The "hors d'oeuvre" on the menu includes paté, crab cocktail or ham with melon; the "entrées" list tomato soup, chicken soup or clear soup; the "main course" entrecôte, veal escalope or cod; "desserts" ice cream, fresh fruit or bavares. The paradigmatic axis is the vertical line: either paté, or crab cocktail, or ham with melon etc. The syntagmatic axis is the horizontal line: crab cocktail first, then clear soup, then cod and finally fresh fruit. A text selects values in a similar way and then places them in a particular order.

the earth serves as an important characteristic of the paradisiacal state of the garden. The text presupposes a reality and a reader living in this reality in which lack of water is a known phenomenon and abundance of water a positive fact. It could not have been written in Holland, where lack of water is unknown and God would rather have been a dike-builder than one who gives sufficient water. So Gen 2-3 is indirectly motivated by the communicative situation within which it is intended to function. Readers who assign meaning to this text are supposed to take into account the iconically motivated relations between text and reality. Because this syntagmatic and paradigmatic iconic motivation is hardly everywhere presupposed in a text, it is impossible to make an analysis of all these relations. In the following analysis of Gen 2-3 it will be indicated now and then.

The second type of iconicity may be called "iconicity by isomorphism" (Haiman 1980). This iconicity concerns the analogies the reader perceives between the linguistic signs and arrangements of signs in the text itself. The reader observes a certain similarity between the forms, that is to say the expression forms in the text, which he connects with a certain content or content form. The similarity between the expression forms or between the arrangements of signs in a text makes the reader give a certain content to those expression forms. Various kinds of analogies can be distinguished on the basis of which the reader may assign meaning or content forms. Frequently occurring forms of iconicity and iconic signs in a text are:

1. Iconicity on the level of sound: the phonetic icon.

The similarity between phonemes can function as a sign referring to a certain content for the reader. In other words the reader may look upon expression forms or phonemes as representing a certain content or meaning. For example, in Gen 2-3 the similarity between the phonemes in *arum* (3:1) and *arummim* (2:25) may function as an iconic sign for the reader and draw his attention to the fact that the similarity in sound correspond to a similarity in meaning.

2. Iconicity on the morphological level: the morphemic icon.

The similarity between morphemes, such as grammatical endings and prepositions, may function for the reader as referring to a certain content. For example, in Gen 2-3 the similarity between the grammatical feminine endings in *išša* and *adama* may draw the reader's attention to a similarity or analogy in meaning. This iconic similarity induces the reader to an analogical way of reasoning and may consequently become the basis of an interpretation of the text.

3. Iconicity on the sememic level: the sememic icon.

The resemblance between sememes, i.e. words and stems which occur in the text, can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content. When this happens, the reader considers the sememes as iconic signs, as

representants of a certain analogical content. In this way the resemblance in Gen 2-3 between the two terms *adam* and *adama* or between the two pairs of terms *adam* - *adama* and *iš* - *išša* makes the reader aware of an analogy in meaning between the terms and pairs of terms. The reader can base himself on this analogy when he gives meaning to the text.

#### 4. Iconicity on the syntactical level: the syntactic icon.

A resemblance in the syntactic structure of sentences and in the syntactic positions of words in a sentence, or on the other hand a striking fact in a syntactic structure, can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content. In Gen 2-3 for example the syntactic structure of the two verses 3:1 and 3:14, the repeated sememes, the noun *naḥaš* (serpent) with a comparative *mi-*, and the terms *arum* (shrewd) and *arur* (cursed), alert the reader to the change in the position of the serpent. The syntactic structure and the repeated sememes can become an iconic sign for the reader to which he can attribute a particular meaning.

#### 5. Iconicity on the textual level: the textual icon.

The resemblance in the stylistic textual structure of recurring sentences or parts of the text can function for the reader as a reference to a certain content. The concentric structure of a text (ABCXCBA), for example, can alert the reader to the central position of a certain part of the text.

Anyone confronted with the concept iconicity for the first time will probably not immediately fathom its precise meaning and value, but he will come to understand its significance as a result of practical experience with analysis. Anticipating this experience, a number of advantages for textual analysis can be mentioned relating to the Peircean approach to iconicity. This approach shows that a text is not only a conventional unity, but also a potential one, i.e. a collection of possibilities. It shows that it is up to the reader to transfer these possibilities of the text into meaning by exploiting the iconic qualities of the text for his analogical interpretation. In this sense the Peircean approach complements Greimas' approach, which is based on symbolic sign relations. It shows that not only conventionality and potentiality on the part of the text are of importance, but also reasoning and creativity on the part of the reader. A second advantage is that the attention for iconic relations makes the analyst alert to qualities and similarities which are not of a logical but of a different nature. By defining the icons, the analyst is able to recognize and make explicit similarities which form the basis of the process of giving meaning. With reference to the semantic analysis of Gen 2-3 this means that the semiotic views of Greimas, for the analysis of the logical relations between the textual elements, and the semiotic views of Peirce, for the analysis of the analogical relations between the textual elements, are applied with a certain flexibility. In both parts the contribution of the text and that of the reader will be made as explicit as possible.

The first question one should ask in a semantic analysis is: what is the text all about, or, which lines of meaning are the most important in the text? A careful reading of Gen 2–3 yields five distinct lines of meaning or isotopies, viz:

1. the relation between God and man
2. the relation between man and earth
3. the relation between man and animal
4. the relation between man and woman
5. the relation between life and death.

These isotopies will be analysed separately. The analysis of each isotopy consists of two parts:

- a. an analysis of the general basis of the isotopy
- b. an analysis of the specific contents of the isotopy.

## **6.2 The Analysis of the Relation between God and Man**

### **6.2.1 The General Basis**

Gen 2–3 starts from a general cultural and religious code in which YHWH God is the name of the Godhead which has a particular relation with man. This code is present in the text as a classemic basis. That is to say that this religious code is presented to the reader in recurrent elements of meaning which form (part of) the (textual) context. The classemes which in Gen 2–3 form the basis of the relation God – man<sup>12</sup> can be described in their mutual relations as follows.

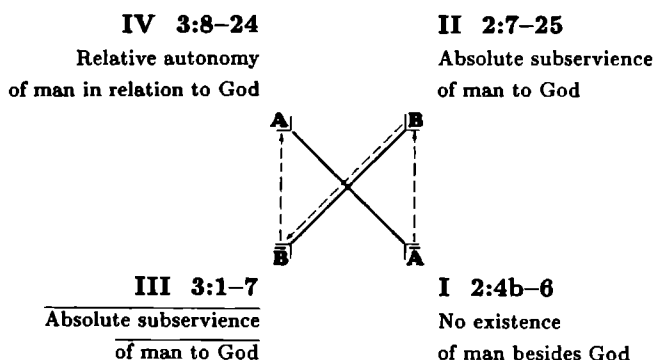
Gen 2 opens, in verses 2:4b–6, with a situation in which besides God no human being exist. In 2:7 God creates man and in 2:7–25 the latter receives trees, work, a command, a prohibition, animals and woman. In this phase man is an object rather than a subject because he is totally dependent on God. The only thing he does, and that at the instigation of God, is to give the animals and the woman names. The classemic basis of Gen 2:7–25 can therefore be summarized as follows: absolute subservience of man to God/. This situation changes in 3:1–7. Here man and woman violate

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<sup>12</sup> This part of the semantic analysis refers to the general contents of God and his relations, and not to the specific name YHWH God. That is why in sections 6.2 to 6.5 reference is made to God only and not to YHWH God. At the end of the semantic analysis, in 6.6.2, the name YHWH God will be discussed.

In principle “man” means human being, unless it is used in connection with woman, in which case it means male person. This distinction will be discussed in greater detail in section 6.5.

the prohibition and deny their absolute subservience to God. This can be represented as: /absolute subservience to God/. In the following part 3:8-24 God appears as an examiner and punisher, but nevertheless man is no longer merely dependent on God. Having become partly like God, man and woman are more or less able to act autonomously and on their own initiative, in other words they can act independently of God. They can bring forth children, till the earth, acquire food and give new names. The classic basis of this part of the text, 3:8-24, can be summarized as: /relative autonomy of man in relation to God/. The classic or general basis of the relation between God and man in these four episodes of Gen 2-3 can therefore be represented in the following semiotic square:



In other words, Gen 2-3 derives general values or classemes from the general, culturally determined code with reference to the relations between God and man. They form the contextual basis on which, or the background against which, the reader can situate the more specific values or kernel semes. Within the text the classemes are defined by mutual relations. These relations are logically arranged in a taxonomy or value structure and represented in the semiotic square printed above. Gen 2-3 presents these classic relations as a compulsory or imperative strategy to the reader. The reader has no option: the text prescribes that the reader in the process of interpretation of Gen 2-3 should relate man to God and, in doing so, consider God as absolutely or relatively superior to man and man as not autonomous or relatively autonomous with respect to God. The text not only offers the reader this static classic arrangement but also a dynamic one. This dynamics is indicated in the semiotic square by means of a taxonomic arrow which shows that the reader is confronted with these relations in four different episodes, namely: 2:4b-6; 2:7-25; 3:1-7 and 3:8-24. The logical classic positions are chronologically present



in the text, so that a dynamic development comes into being from  $\bar{A}$  to  $B$ , from  $B$  to  $\bar{B}$  and from  $\bar{B}$  to  $A$ .

### 6.2.2 The Specific Contents

The general contents of the relation between God and man in Gen 2-3 is determined by the above-mentioned classemes. The specific contents consists of kernel semes which render three aspects of this relation in concrete terms (a) *the creation, placing and the relating*, (b) *the functions* and (c) *the limits* of man as they are established in relation to God. As these three groups of kernel semes undergo changes in the four text episodes, they have to be described per episode.

#### =Episode I: 2:4b-6=

In the first place the reader of Gen 2-3 is confronted with an initial setting, 2:4b-6,<sup>13</sup> in which man is absent. God however is present; he does not have to be created and apparently he has no beginning. Man still has to be created and so he has a beginning. The relation between God and man is therefore expressed principally by this distinction. Verse 2:4b plots the semantic trajectory of God: he is the one who makes (*asa*). As the only one who is not created, he is able to install heaven and earth, i.e. everything.<sup>14</sup> Reading 2:4b-5, the reader comes to expect that it is God who will create man. Apart from this difference between God and man, 2:5 also reveals an important similarity. Both have a function with reference to the earth. God has a duty with respect to the entire earth (*erets*), because he has to send rain. Man has a duty with respect to the arable part of the earth or soil (*adama*), since he has to till it. The activities of both complement each other: God and man are like partners in their relation to earth. But this partnership has not yet been established any more than the performance of the functions is executed. Only the absence is indicated. The absence of man, the absence of a function both for God (sending rain) and man (tilling), and the absence of partnership are elements of meaning which lend semantic openness to these verses. In that sense it is a real beginning.

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<sup>13</sup> Gen 2:6 belongs to this initial situation and contains the first removal of a deficiency. But as God nor man are involved, this verse does not have to be considered in the discussion of the relation God-man. Verse 2:6 will be dealt with in section 6.3.2.

<sup>14</sup> See also Scullion 1974.

(a) *God creates, places and relates man.*

God's creating, which in 2:4b still bore a general character, is given more concrete expression in 2:7. God forms (*yatsar*) man. He determines man's origin from earth and the temporal starting point of man. The formulation shows that man was on the one hand formed of dust of the earth and on the other hand of divine breath, and that man has an earthly and a divine component. Hence, the relation between man and earth is not only functional (2:5), but also substantial (2:7).

Apart from this God gives man his place. He puts man in the garden (2:8,15), but denies him the tree in the centre of the garden and so, indirectly, the centre of the garden as well (2:9,17).<sup>15</sup>

The creation of man is followed by the creation of the garden, the trees, the animals and woman and they are all given to man by God. They are explicitly related to each other: in 2:9,16,17 man is linked with the trees, in 2:15 with the garden, in 2:19 with the animals and in 2:22 with woman.

The kernel senses which have been discussed so far are:

1. temporal: God determines the beginning of man
2. spatial: God determines the place of man in the garden
3. substantial: God forms man out of earth and divine breath
4. relational: God relates man to the garden, the trees, the animals and the woman.

(b) *God determines man's functions.*

The second group of elements of meaning in the relation between God and man deals with man's functions. God offers functions to man which in the text are expressed by means of the prefix *le-*, i.e. (in order) to. Three groups of functions can be distinguished: 1. to see, to eat and to enjoy 2. to till and to guard 3. to speak and to name.

1. To see, to eat and to enjoy (2:9 *le-mare; le-ma'akal; nehmad; tob*). The trees in the garden are desirable to look at and good to eat of. The relation between a tree and fruit that can be eaten by man is not explained by the text; it presupposes the reader knows that in reality fruit grows in trees and that man can enjoy them and eat from them. It presupposes the reader to consider the text as corresponding to reality.

It is striking that after the creation of man by God this sensual pleasure should be mentioned first. Apparently God does not create man merely as a being oriented towards work, or purely for his own sake, but for the sake of man himself. The trees do not only exist to enable man to stay alive but they also exist for man to derive a certain pleasure. Sensual

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<sup>15</sup> See also: Patte and Parker 1980.

pleasure is offered to man as a first value prior to all other functions and this is expressed in the text by means of the words *nehmad* (desirable) and *tob* (good). Later in the episode (in 2:19 and 2:22) this appreciation is taken for granted, for man has to look at the animals and woman and he has to express his appreciation in language. At the end of this episode (2:25) this pleasure gets a new dimension. Verse 2:25 does not only express uncomplicated seeing but at the same time, by means of the term *boš* (to be ashamed), indicates that seeing may have negative consequences. This entails the possibility of not enjoying. As in the description of the initial situation in 2:4b–6 the impetus to change has been given and a semantic line for the sequel has been plotted.

2. To till and to guard (2:15 *le-ʾobdah*; *le-šomrah*). Man's stay in the garden is not without obligations. Apart from the possibility to see, to eat and to enjoy, man also has a task or purpose separate from himself. He has to till (the soil or earth in) the garden and to guard it.<sup>16</sup> Verse 2:5, which said that man was not there to till the earth yet, prepared the reader for this task. The term *abad* (to work) indicates man's duty with respect to the earth. At the same time the second meaning of *abad*, viz. to serve, is conveyed. By tilling the earth in the garden man serves God. In this verse the assignment to till is restricted to the earth or soil inside the garden. The earth outside the garden remains as yet untilled. The restriction to the garden also appeared from the term *šamar* (to guard). This word indicates that the garden is distinct from the earth. To guard implies to protect against something, against danger from the outside. In other words the term *šamar* implies the possibility of loss.<sup>17</sup> Only that which may be lost needs protection. As *boš* (to be ashamed) created in the text semantic openness for a change of the situation of seeing and enjoying, so *šamar* (to guard) includes the semantic openness to change by means of loss. It is rather striking that the text presupposes that, although God determines everything, man already has the capacity to till the earth. Gen 2:15 presupposes that God does not have to teach man agriculture<sup>18</sup> but that man has the potential to perform this function adequately.

3. To speak and to name (2:19–20 *qara* to name, 2:23 *amar* to speak). Speaking and naming are the third and last function, but judging from the extensive attention devoted to it in the text (2:19–20, 22–23) by no means the least. God brings the animals and woman to man so that he may give them a name, become conscious of his relation with them and express his appreciation in language. The text assumes that the reader knows that man has the capacity to speak.

<sup>16</sup> For the fact that there is *adama* in the garden and outside it see section 6.3.2.

<sup>17</sup> See Bratsiotis 1977.

<sup>18</sup> This is in contrast to other myths of creation. See Jacob 1934, ad 2:15.

In short, in 2:7-25 a number of kernel semes refer to the functions which God gives to man. They can be described as: to see, to eat, to enjoy, to till, to guard, to speak and to name.

(c) *God determines man's limits.*

The third group of elements of meaning which bear on the relation between God and man in episode II arouses the reader's interest most, because God defines man's limits by issuing both a commandment and a prohibition (2:16-17 *tsaba*, (for)bid). This entails the previously described positive functions being defined in a negative way. God introduces a negative aspect in what was until now positive only. Man can no longer freely possess or enjoy the fruits of the trees, but the food is now presented to him in terms of commandment and prohibition. In this way the food is not only placed in a peremptory and defined framework, but also possesses the semantic openness or the possibility for change.

The same applies to the guarding of the garden discussed before. In 2:15 this word already implies the sense of protecting against something or somebody, and in 2:16-17 God indicates the possibility of loss. By connecting the act of guarding with a commandment and a prohibition, the loss of the garden may be caused not only by external, but also internal danger.

The positive power of the duty to till the earth in the garden has likewise been weakened. In the first episode (2:5) the tilling could still be interpreted as a jointed responsibility in respect of the earth within a cooperative framework. In this second episode it becomes clear that, instead of partnership there is now only a hierarchical setting, in which God is the master and man is the servant. The tilling (*abad*) of the earth in the garden is clearly service (*abad*) of God: the term *abad* represents both aspects.<sup>19</sup>

The word *tsaba*, which imposes rules on eating, tilling and guarding and the explicit mention of death as a sanction, also makes the hierarchical context clear. This hierarchical structure cannot be interpreted merely as God's care in the form of a well-meant, but noncommittal warning.<sup>20</sup> For the paronomastic infinitive *mot tamut* (you will surely die) reveals otherwise: the repetition of the term to die emphasizes the peremptory

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<sup>19</sup> This does not mean that *abad* functions in the same way in all texts of the Hebrew Bible. In the textual context of Exodus, for example, the term *abad* is used to express slave labour, and in that of Jesaja *abad* has no hierarchical meaning. The context is therefore of prime importance in the assignment of a meaning or a value. It is therefore not sufficient to consult a dictionary to determine the meaning of a word, because there it is the general a-contextual definition of the meaning and not the textual context that is central.

<sup>20</sup> As Landy 1983: 212 indicates.

nature of the sanction.<sup>21</sup> It is striking that this sanction presupposes that man knows what death is, whereas up to now he has only been acquainted with life. God himself creates in a situation of life the possibility of loss of life. He himself creates death for the first time.

Summarizing, God is responsible for everything in episode II, 2:7–25. He creates man out of earth and divine breath, he places man in the garden but denies him access to the centre of the garden, he relates man to the other creatures. He gives man the functions to see, to eat and to enjoy, to till and to guard, to speak and to name. And he places restrictions upon man. Although God's starting point in his acting is the fact that man possesses the capacities to see and to speak, to till the garden and to guard it,<sup>22</sup> man and his capacities are nevertheless completely bound up with God: he is therefore not free to act as he wishes. He is completely at the disposal of God and the earth in the garden. That is why the kernel semes which define the relation between God and man in this episode can be described as /restraint/ and /freedom/. That man possesses the capacity to change in spite of this is indicated semantically by means of the words *šamar* (to guard), *mut* (to die) and *boš* (to be ashamed). These words present to the reader the possibility of change. In other words: in episode II God assigns values to man or man is given his identity, because God relates man to place and time, work and functions, and to God himself. This relating of man and the identity given are as yet provisional. This appears from the semantic openness of episode II.

### =Episode III: 3:1–7=

The third part of the text of Gen 2–3, 3:1–7 shows a reversal. God is no longer the one who determines everything, he does not even occur directly as a character in the story. Now it is man who acts and who, together with the serpent, determines the relation between God and man. Although there is a link with all the other relations that man has, the discussion in this section is restricted to the relation between God and man. The other relations will be dealt with when the other isotopies are discussed.

#### (a) *The denial or relativizing of God's creation, placing and relating.*

The central idea that God created man out of earth and divine breath,

<sup>21</sup> Furthermore it appears from 3:1–7 that both the serpent and woman take God's statement as a prohibition and a sanction. The same emerges from 3:8–24: God repeats the word to forbid and so points to the peremptory character of his prohibition.

<sup>22</sup> In other words, God gives man contracts (in the sense of /having to/), but the capacities (in the sense of /to be able to/ and /to know how to/) are not explicitly given by God. The text presupposes that a number of these capacities are innate. Later in Gen 2–3 it will become clear that on the basis of these and other implied capacities man can reject the contracts offered by God.

so that man consists of both an earthly and a divine component, is not changed in 3:1-7. However, in this episode only the divine dimension is dealt with; the earthly dimension is not mentioned and is present only indirectly. It is the serpent which in 3:5 puts forward the godlike aspect: "for God knows that as soon as you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God knowing good and bad." (3:5). In 3:6 man eats and the consequence of this is described in 3:7 as a parallel to 3:5, "Then the eyes of both were opened and they realized that they were naked." (3:7a). The opening of the eyes and the knowledge of what was predicted in 3:5 is realized in 3:7. Whether the resemblance to God is realized remains as yet uncertain. Only in the following episode (3:22) it becomes clear that the serpent was right about this as well.

The place previously determined by God, viz. the garden and the centre of the garden, is partly denied in 3:1-7. In these verses all interest goes out to the tree in the centre of the garden. Man's quest for the centre of the garden is imaginatively expressed in this episode: the tree concerned is not called the forbidden tree, or the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, but the tree in the centre of the garden (3:3).

The relations installed by God between man and the trees, the animals and woman undergo various changes. Before, man spoke at the instigation of God; now woman (man) speaks of her own accord. Before, man spoke in order to label and define, now there is a dialogue between subjects. Before, God spoke to man, man to the animals and to woman, now it is first an animal that speaks, followed by woman. One could speak of relations of more or less equal partners or at least of a relation in which there is room for dialogue. Monologues and relations which are established from the top, God - man - woman and animals, are replaced by dialogues and relations established from below, animal - woman - man - God. What is more, the relation between God and man, which in the previous episode was discussed only indirectly, is now brought up directly by the serpent (3:5). The latter mentions the possibility that man will become like God. Whether the serpent is right or not, it is in any case made clear that in this episode the attention is directed more towards man's divine dimension than towards his earthly dimension, and that there is a negation of previously determined hierarchical relations.

*(b) Supplementation of the functions by man.*

In 3:6 the functions *tob le-ma'akal* (good to eat of) and *ta'awa le-enayim* (desirable to the eyes) explicitly refer back to 2:9. After having been called man's first distinctive quality in 2:9, they now occur in 3:6 as the first autonomous actions. This establishes the importance of these functions. The addition of a new function in 3:6 *nehmad le-haskil* (desirable to gain insight, to understand) is crucial. It is crucial because man for the first time assigns to himself a modality and a quality which until now had

been God's work only, and also because the aesthetic and action-oriented functions are now extended with a cognitive function. In this way man supplements the dimension of insight and understanding that have been absent until now. This function should not be interpreted in too theoretical a light, because *haskil* expresses knowing-about as much as skill or ability to act.<sup>23</sup> This is also evident from the connection with *yada* (to know) (3:6-7), which is also both theoretical and practical in nature. *haskil* points the way towards gaining insight; it points to the making of distinctions which results in understanding and insights. The functions of to eat (*akal*), to see (*ra'a*), and to understand *haskil* result in a knowing (*yada*)<sup>24</sup> or an awareness which, according to the serpent, makes man like unto God.<sup>25</sup>

At first sight it seems odd that 3:1-7 refers to 2:16-17, the commandment and the prohibition to eat, and to 2:9, seeing and enjoying food, but not to 2:15 or to the function of guarding and tilling the earth in the garden. Both in the speaking of the serpent and of woman, and in the actual eating itself, no mention is made of the tilling of the earth. The link between man and earth, which had previously been worked out in a temporal aspect (the beginning of man lies in the earth), a material aspect (man is made of dust of the earth), and a functional aspect (man has to till the earth), is not denied explicitly but is ignored. Man pays no attention to it.

In episode III speaking is no longer a function which man performs at the instigation of God, but one which man performs autonomously and independently. Speaking is no longer purely a matter of classification and naming (2:20), nor is it a monologue as in 2:23, speaking has become a dialogue.

(c) *The denial of the limits.*

The limits which God determined in episode II are transgressed and therefore denied in episode III. Man does not only eat of the fruit of the trees in the centre of the garden, but by taking an independent decision based on his own sensory, intentional and cognitive desires and capacities, man also seizes his autonomy. Even if the serpent plays a role in the decision-making process as instigator and informant, man nevertheless takes a decision based on his own insights and, as a result of this, he acts autonomously.

Summarizing: man uses the capacities acquired in episode II (to see, to eat, to enjoy, to speak) to change autonomously the place, functions and limits as determined by God. Man sees, eats and acquires the new function of insight and understanding. These three functions together result in an

<sup>23</sup> See M. Saebø in THAT II: 824.

<sup>24</sup> See G.J. Botterweck in ThWAT III: 491-492: in texts of the Tora, *yada* is often the consequence, effect or result of a visual (*ra'a*) or auditive (*šama*) observation.

<sup>25</sup> See section 6.6 for a discussion of knowledge of good and bad.

awareness or knowledge which according to the serpent make man resemble God. Man transgresses the limits God determined in 2:7-25 and seizes his freedom and autonomy. Consequently he denies that he is subservient to God. His speaking is no longer merely answering God but it is an act taking place on his own initiative and in a dialogue with others. These changes, brought about by the acquisition of the values /awareness/, /knowledge/, /autonomy/ and /speaking in a dialogue/, make man's relation with God a different one. It is no longer the indirect relation between man and God, which was maintained via man's tilling the earth in the garden, but the direct relation between man and God which takes up a central position. Not only the relation between man and the Godhead outside man is important, but also the godlike dimension in man himself. By acquiring autonomy and awareness he aims at a realization of the godlike component in himself. This search for and reinforcement of the godlike element in man is expressed by the location where everything takes place: the centre of the garden. This location is the externalization of the godlike dimension. By arriving at this location, man realizes his godlike dimension. In other words, in episode III man denies and changes the provisional relation between God and man as established by God in episode II.

=Episode IV: 3:8-25=

In the fourth textual segment the consequences of man's behaviour, which were described in 3:1-7, become visible. Even if God is the dominant character in episode IV, both God and man ultimately determine the new and now definitive form of their relation, as a result of the capacities acquired by man in episode III

*(a) God creates, places and relates man once more.*

After God has made man out of earth and divine breath in episode II and man has reinforced especially his innate godlike dimension in episode III, God performs actions in episode IV which primarily reinforce the earthly dimension of man. God links man to earth and earth to man: man is dependent on the crop yielded by the earth, the earth is dependent on the tilling of man (3:17-19). So during his life man is tied to the earth hand and foot. Furthermore it appears that man does not only derive his origin from the earth, but will also return to it at the end of his life (3:19,23). Man's beginning and end, as well as his life in between, are determined largely by the link with the earth. This is represented by the place: God expels man from the garden to the earth outside the garden. In short, both temporally and spatially and functionally, God reinforces the link between man and earth.

God brings about changes in the relations of man with the plants, the animals and woman. Self-evident relations become laborious relations and



the non-hierarchical relations become hierarchical (3:20). The serpent is from now on subordinated to the seed of woman (3:14,15) and woman in her turn is subjected to the domination of man (3:16-20).

(b) *The functions of man.*

In episode II God gave man the functions of 1. to see, eat and enjoy, 2. to till and guard, and 3. to speak and name. In episode III man performed the functions to see, eat and enjoy and supplemented them with a new function, viz. to understand or know. In the same episode man ignored the functions to till and to guard and carried out the function of speaking in the form of a dialogue. In episode IV these functions are re-determined.

The first group of functions changes considerably. The combination of eating, seeing and enjoying is lost in episode IV. Eating is now necessary primarily to stay alive and goes hand in hand with labour rather than with seeing and enjoying (3:17-19). Eating was pure enjoyment before, but now only thorns and thistles are growing, and eating gives no pleasure. The function of understanding, knowing or having insight acquired in episode III is retained in episode IV. Section 6.6 will look into the significance of this knowledge. The second group of functions is given all the attention. The tilling of the earth outside the garden has a central position. Whereas working in the garden used to be a light duty, it is now intensified and becomes hard work. The function of guarding is taken away from man. The kerubim take over this task and they have to guard the path to the tree of life. The word *šamar* (to guard), which only occurs in 2:15 and 3:24 is an iconic quality, an sememic icon: the use of the same stem shows the reader both the similarity and change. On the basis of this quality the reader can give meaning to the similarities and differences between episodes II and IV: at first the garden is guarded by and for man, now the guarding is aimed against man. In this way the semantic openness to loss which was comprised in the word *šamar* has become realized in a very characteristic way. The third group of functions is also given its final formulation. In episode II man spoke only on the instigation of God and in a monologue, and in episode III autonomously in a dialogue with others. It now appears in episode IV (3:20) that man has kept his autonomy with respect to speaking. Although in 3:20 there is no question of a dialogue, man's speaking testifies to insight into and knowledge of his own limited knowledge and abilities.

In the course of Gen 2-3 man's functions have become more complex. In the first episode man does not exist yet and his most important function as tiller of the earth is consequently only mentioned as a function in the future. In the second episode God determines the functions of man in a hierarchical way, taking man's capacities and abilities for his starting point. In the third episode a change takes place as man makes use of his capacities supplementing some functions and denying or ignoring others.

In the fourth episode God and man ultimately influence the determination and execution of man's functions, duties and assignments. God has influence on the fact that man labours to till the earth and is totally tied to the earth. In this way God realizes man's earthly dimension. Man has influence on the functions of seeing, knowing or being aware and bringing forth children. In this way man realizes his own godlike dimension. Both God and man have influence, but God's influence is greater. This is clear from the attention paid in episode IV to the tilling of the earth in 3:17-19 and 3:22-23, an activity that is instigated and reinforced by God. It also appears from the term *abad*, to work and serve, how closely this function of tilling the earth is linked with the relation between God and man. At the same time, however, it is clear that man makes use of his capacity of knowing, which he has acquired himself for this tilling and serving. In other words, man needs the reinforced earthly and godlike dimension to be able to perform his task of tilling the earth and thereby serving God adequately. Man's contribution is essential in this respect.

(c) *God determines man's limits.*

God does not issue commandments and prohibitions as in episode II, but he does set limits. This appears from 3:22 *pen* (lest), lest man should take of the tree of eternal life, and from 3:23-24, the expulsion of man from the garden and the placing of the kerubim as guards of the garden. In spite of the reinforcement of the godlike dimension it is not man but God who defines the limits of his existence.

In conclusion it may be said of episode IV that man retains the capacities acquired earlier in episode II and the function of knowing, which he acquired independently in episode III, but that it is God who acts directly with reference to the temporal, spatial, functional and material restriction to the earth. The text of 3:8-24 therefore presents man in a state of relative autonomy: he is autonomous in seeing, knowing and being aware. God is aware of this relative autonomy because he acknowledges man as a creature similar to himself. Man is only relatively autonomous because of his earthly dimension, which binds him hand and foot to the earth and to his service to God through tilling the earth. In this way it appears at the end of the story that the relation between God and man in episode II is only provisional, and that episode IV presents the final and definitive form of this relation in the story. This semantic coherence and the development from episode II, via episode III to episode IV may be represented in the following semiotic square.<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> The function of semiotic squares in this analysis of Gen 2-3 is to give a summary and representation of the preceding part of the analysis. It is not intended as a strictly logical explanation of the textual structure.

**IV 3: 8-24**

Definitive relation

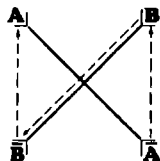
God-man:

Dependence + freedom: 1

inclusiveness

Godlike + earthly dimension 2

related to each other

**III 3:1-7**

Provisional relation

God-man:

Dependence + freedom: 1

exclusiveness

Godlike dimension 2

earthly dimension

**II 2:7-25**

Provisional relation

God-man:

1 Dependence + freedom:

exclusiveness

2 Godlike + earthly dimension

separate from each other

**I 2:4b-6**

Definitive relation

God-man:

1 —

2 Godlike + earthly dimension

**6.2.3 Final remarks**

From the first verse to the last, the reader of Gen 2-3 is confronted with the relation between God and man. This is an important isotopy or line of meaning in this text. This relation is gradually given shape, so that it is not until the end that the reader can connect a first line of meaning with the text, which later can be extend to a first network of meaning together with other lines of meaning.

The contents of this isotopy is supported in the first place by the textual context or classemic basis and cannot be described as a single unity, but as a coherent structure of values represented in the semiotic square presented above (see 6.2.1). In this square the classemes /autonomy/ and /subservience/ are on one semantic axis. Although they presuppose each other, they are contrary: the presence of *A* presupposes the presence of *B*. At the same time *A* and *B* imply the contradictory values  $\bar{A}$  and  $\bar{B}$ . On the basis of these differentiations the reader can assign value to the text and attach a general line of meaning to it.

Apart from the general contextual basis the specific contents of this isotopy are defined by kernel semes whose meaning is likewise determined by mutual similarities and differences. The preceding analysis shows that the kernel semes specify the relation between God and man in two respects. The first is the external aspect, the relation between man and God

outside man and the second is the internal aspect, the divine (and earthly) dimension within man. The relation between man and God, the first aspect, appears to move between the two poles of absolute dependence and absolute freedom. In episode II God is the initiator and acting character and he sees to it that the relation between God and man is close to the first pole. In episode III man is the initiator and acting character and he is responsible for the fact that the relation between God and man gradually moves closer to the second pole. In this episode man seizes his freedom. Finally in episode IV a middle course is adopted. God and man both contribute towards a kind of equilibrium between freedom and dependence. At the end the original contradiction of either freedom or dependence has been removed and has been replaced by both freedom and dependence, so that the relation in which these terms are mutually exclusive has become replaced by one of mutual inclusiveness.

The second, internal aspect of the relation between God and man is present in a more subtle way. In episode I man does not yet exist; in episode II God creates him out of dust of the earth and divine breath. The question might arise whether this gives man an earthly and a divine dimension, if it were not for the fact that both the earthly and divine dimension are explicitly mentioned in episode III and IV. In episode II both dimensions were presented as existing in principle. Man confirmed and reinforced the divine dimension in episode III and God the earthly dimension in episode IV. Moreover, whereas in episode II both dimensions were introduced independently of each other and episode III discussed only one dimension, both dimensions are related to each other in episode IV. The earthly and divine dimensions are not mutually exclusive but inclusive, so that ultimately both are a part of man.

The reader identifies or assigns meaning to the linguistic sign "man" in the story of Gen 2-3. This process of giving meaning is based on the values man acquires in the text as a result of the relations with other textual elements such as the relation with God. The values which man acquires through his relation with God are mentioned in four phases in Gen 2-3. At first there is no human being existing beside God ( $\bar{A}$ ). Then man is created and he is given substance as a result of an initial relation to God ( $B$ ). In a third instance man himself acquires an altered substance by denying and supplementing his original relation with God ( $\bar{B}$ ). Man acquires the final values because God brings about a definitive relation between man and God ( $A$ ). Consequently it appears that:

1.  $\bar{A}$  prepares the way for  $A$  because of the semantic openness brought about by *terem* (before), and *lo* and *ayin* (not yet) in 2:5.
2.  $B$  prepares the way for  $\bar{B}$  because of the semantic openness brought about by terms like *šamar*, *boš*, *mut*, *tsaba*.
3.  $\bar{B}$  is implied by  $A$ ; or  $\bar{B}$  is necessary for the realization of  $A$ .

So  $A$  is the result of  $\bar{B}$ ,  $\bar{B}$  of  $B$ , and  $B$  of  $\bar{A}$ . The values which constitute the relation between God and man are therefore arranged in logical positions of  $A$ ,  $B$ ,  $\bar{A}$  and  $\bar{B}$ , which imply each other and which make the growth of the relation between God and man clear. For they show that this growth is present in the text from the beginning. In this way the present semiotic analysis makes it clear that in Gen 2-3, as a result of a growing relation with God, man is given a semantic content which is based on an increasing differentiation between God and man.

## 6.3 The Analysis of the Relation between Man and Earth

### 6.3.1 The General basis

A second general and culturally defined category which the text presents to the reader in the frequently recurring elements of meaning or *classemes* concerns the relation between *adam* man and *adama* earth. It is clear that this cultural code presupposes a geographically, historically, socially and economically defined world which affects the content of this isotopy.

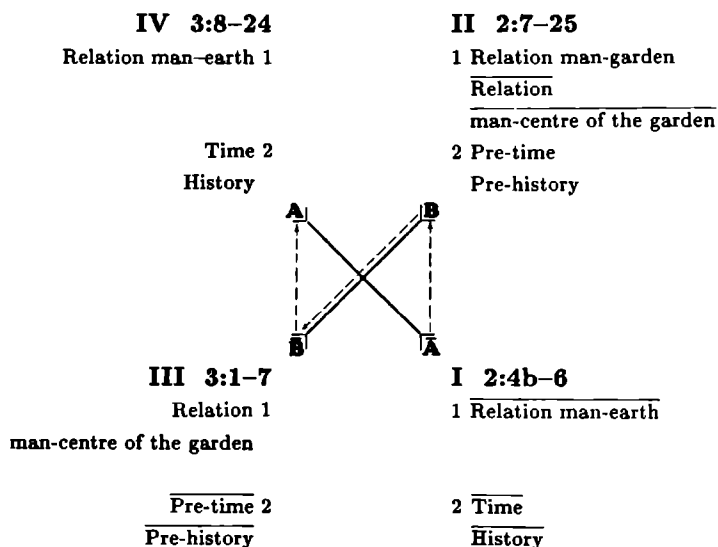
The narrative analysis underscored the central role of the relation between man and earth. In the last two decades a growing number of authors<sup>27</sup> have come to see the relation between man and earth as at least one of the main themes of Gen 2-3, unlike previous centuries, in which "the fall" was taken to be the only or most important theme. The following semantic analysis will show that this line of meaning is also of prime importance from a semantic viewpoint. This line of meaning forms the spatial and temporal framework within which the other isotopies, and so all elements of meaning, are situated.

The relation between *adam* and *adama* is formed by *classemes* which indicate the space and time within which the text is set. The first episode of Gen 2-3 begins with an indication of time: "When YHWH God made the earth and the heaven". The verses 2:4b-6 describe the situation at the moment of creation, a situation which is characterized temporally by "not-yet-being" or "before, prior to" (twice *terem* prior to, twice a negation viz. *lo* and *ayn*) and spatially by the absence of the relation between man and the earth. In episode II (2:7-25) time and space begin. Man is created and is placed in the garden. The location of the garden in the East (2:8 *miqqedem*) can also contain an indication of time.<sup>28</sup> A place and time are referred to which precede ordinary human history, an initial period or

<sup>27</sup> They include: Agrell 1976, Brueggemann 1970, Casalis 1976, Jobling 1980.1986, Naidoff 1978, von Rad 1967, Vogels 1983, Walsh 1977, Westermann 1974.

<sup>28</sup> The general meaning of the root *qdm* (which forms the basis of a great number of nouns, verbs and prepositions) is /before/ in the spatial and temporal sense; *qedem*

pre-history. In episode III (3:1-6) the space is restricted to the centre of the garden. From the point of view of time the actions of this episode take place in the time which follows the very first beginning. In episode IV (3:8-24) the transition is made to the time and place known to the reader. Man is expelled from the garden and linked to the earth. The relation which is installed between man and the earth outside the garden is final: pre-history has ended and history can begin. The classemic basis of the text, which is, in this case, spatial and temporal, can therefore be represented in the following semiotic square.




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occurs in many texts both in a spatial as well as a temporal sense (THAT II: 587, HAL III: 998). The term *miqqedem* in Gen 2:8 and 3:24 is very cursorily dealt with in lexicons: without providing any further explanation *miqqedem* is generally interpreted in the spatial sense only. THAT only mentions that *qedem* occurs nine times in Gen, each time in a spatial sense and HAL merely refers to Westermann 1974. Westermann does not provide any explanation either but notes that *miqqedem* means "im Osten" in 2:8 and "Östlich vom" in 3:24. Both on the basis of the context of Gen 2 as well as on the basis of the general temporal meaning of *qedem*, the present writer thinks it probable that in Gen 2:8 *miqqedem* carries both the specific sense of "in the east" as well as the general sense of "in the pre-time".

### 6.3.2 The Specific Contents

Whereas the general contents of the relation between man and earth in Gen 2–3 is determined by the above-mentioned *classes*, the specific contents is defined by kernel *semes* which define five aspects in the relation between man and earth. The kernel *semes* refer to (a) *the water supply* (b) *the vegetation* (c) *the spatial organization*, and the relation between man and earth with respect to (d) *work* and (e) *food supply*. These five groups of kernel *semes* are indirectly motivated by reality. The reader is supposed to know why in the relation between man and earth water is of great importance, to know that plants or crops may grow on earth etc. That is to say, in reading the text the reader has to make logical and analogical inferences based on symbolical and iconic relations between textual elements and between textual elements and their (intended) relation to aspects of reality. Because the mentioned groups of kernel *semes* are changed in the four textual episodes, they will be described per episode.

#### =Episode I: 2:4b 6=

In the narrative analysis *ed* (flood) proves to have a special position because of its independent actions unrelated to other actants. From a semantic point of view *ed* and the actions of *ed* in 2:6 are also rather striking. Gen 2:6 differs considerably from the preceding and subsequent verses. The preceding verses 2:4b–5 indicate that there is no vegetation, rain or man, whereas in the following verses 2:7ff all attention is directed to man. In 2:6, however, no mention is made of vegetation, rain or man but of *ed*, which wells up from the earth (so it cannot be rain) and makes the surface of the earth wet, but which does not recur in the rest of the story. Therefore Gen 2:6 seems to have been inserted between two sections of the text without having a clear link with the contents of those two sections. Consequently it is necessary first to pay some attention to this odd verse 2:6 and the position of *ed* in it.

#### Excursus: Gen 2:6

The syntactic position of Gen 2:6 is remarkable. The question is whether *ed* is the object or subject in this verse. In the first case *ed* is the object of the action and *ya'ale* is interpreted as a *hifl*-form and 2:6a should be translated as: "he caused an *ed* to well up". The subject of this "causing to well up" might be God or man of 2:5. If God is taken to be the subject (as in Dahood 1981, who translates *ed* by raincloud)<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>29</sup> From a semantic point of view there are objections to Dahood's interpretation of *ed* as a raincloud rising up from the earth. As a rule rainclouds do not rise up from

the following syntactic problem arises. In 2:5b it says *lo humtir yhw h elohim* "YHWH God had not made it rain". If 2:6 had continued this sentence for example with "but YHWH God made *ed* well up from the earth", the order of verb and subject should have been inverted, viz. *ya'ale ed*. Moreover there ought to have been an *imperfectum consecutivum* instead of an imperfect. From a syntactic point of view, therefore, God cannot be the subject of 2:6. If man is taken to be the subject of the action (as in Sachsse 1921, who translates *ed* by canal water or irrigation water)<sup>30</sup> another syntactic problem arises. In 2:5b we read *we-adam ayin la'abod et ha-adama* "and man was not there to till the earth". If 2:6 continued this sentence with "and to make *ed* well up from the earth", for example, the verb form of 2:6 would have to be an infinitive instead of an imperfect, and the order *ed* and *ya'ale* would have to be inverted. So, from a syntactic point of view man cannot be the subject of 2:6. Consequently one cannot but conclude that *ed* is not the object of the action *ya'ale*.

The other syntactic possibility is that *ed* is the subject of the action; *ya'ale* is then interpreted as a qal-form and 2:6 can be translated as "an *ed* welled up from the earth and watered the entire surface of the earth". In this way 2:6 expresses on the one hand, by means of the conjunction *we-* (and) before *ed*, that the story is continued and on the other hand it shows by means of the position of the subject before the verb that a new element is briefly introduced, viz. *ed*. The imperfect form of the verb indicates a recurrent action in the past. In other words, 2:6 calls attention to the new element *ed* which in the past repeatedly drenched the earth. (One can find a similar construction in 2:10 and 3:1 in which a new element, the river and the serpent respectively, is introduced and the course of the story is continued.)

There are also problems with regard to the semantic meaning of *ed*. According to one interpretation *ed* means dew or mist.<sup>31</sup> But this is contrary to what the text attributes to *ed*. For dew and mist do not make wet the entire surface of the earth but only part of it. Nor do dew and mist make the earth wet through and through; rather they make it moist. Another opinion, which is fairly current nowadays, is that

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the earth and, what is more, Dahood's arguments are only based on a hypothetical interpretation of an Ugaritic text and not on texts of the Hebrew Bible.

<sup>30</sup> Sachsse (1921: 277-279) offers a number of convincing arguments in which he demarcates 2:6 from the following episode, which begins in 2:7. However, from a semantic point of view there are some objections to his interpretation of *ed* as canal water or irrigation water. For Sachsse does not offer any linguistic arguments for his interpretation but bases himself on a distinction between on the one hand the prairie (*sade*) which depends on God's rain water and on the other the arable soil (*adama*) which depends on man for its water supply with man depending on the crops the *adama* yields. However, Sachsse only includes Gen 2 in his argumentation and as a result he does not notice that Gen 3:18 says that man also eats of the products of the *sade*. This proves that *sade* and *adama* cannot be distinguished in the way he proposes and consequently invalidates the basis of his interpretation of *ed*.

<sup>31</sup> Jacob 1934 among others. König (1925:199) is opposed to the interpretation of *ed* as "Nebel oder Dunst", because in his opinion there is no basis for it to be found in the Semitic and pre-Asiatic usage in its entirety.



*ed* means flood, a flood which wells up from the bowels of the earth. This interpretation has produced two equally influential exegetic schools. The first school (among others Gunkel 1922 and Speiser 1967) holds that *ed* derives from the Accadic *edu*, meaning flood or river. The second school (Albright 1939, Cassuto 1961 and Sæbø 1970) believes that *ed* derives from the Sumeric *id*, meaning flood or flood deity. Sæbø 1970 provides conclusive evidence on the basis of phonological and semantic arguments that the Hebrew *ed* corresponds with the Sumeric *id*, while the Hebrew *ed*, with a yod as mater lectionis between e and d, corresponds with the Accadic *edu*. This means that following Albright, Cassuto and Sæbø, *ed* can be interpreted as the waters, water stream or flood which wells up from the bowels of the earth and which is the source of all rivers. In 2:6 this *ed* acts independently of God, even though *ed* is not a separate deity like the corresponding Sumeric deity *id* which rules the waters of the depths. (The same holds for the river in 2:10: she too occurs independently of God.) In short, 2:6 can be translated thus: "A flood welled up from the earth and watered the entire surface of the earth."

With a view to defining the semantic contents of 2:4b-6 the kernel semes in the relation between man and earth will be described with the help of the five groups mentioned above (*water supply, vegetation, spatial arrangement, the work relation and the food relation*).

(a) The *water supply* on earth is not provided by God in the form of rain, but by means of an autonomous water stream which wells up from the bowels of the earth. The following kernel semes can be distinguished:

1. a large quantity: a lot of water is involved, which could irrigate the surface of the whole earth;
2. a disorderly and indiscriminate amount of water: the waters from the depths inundate everything indiscriminately;
3. from the bowels of the earth: an upward movement;
4. not dependent of God or man, but an autonomous phenomenon.

(b) There is not a single form of *vegetation*. Yet there are kernel semes to be distinguished which are linked to vegetation:

1. no or nothing, represented by *terem* (before), which occurs twice;
2. everything is absent, represented by *kol* (all) plus a negation, which occurs twice. The vegetation is referred to as a fairly undifferentiated whole;
3. the vegetation is dependent on the earth and man, but this appears only from a negative description.

(c) The *spatial arrangement* on which this episode is based and which influences the whole of Gen 2-3, can be described as follows. The *erets* is the earth in general. The *adama* is the surface of the *erets*, or the surface of the earth or soil seen from the point of view of man. The *adama* consists of fields, and, as appears from the following episode, a garden, so that a

distinction can be made between the earth *adama* inside the garden<sup>32</sup> and the earth outside the garden.<sup>33</sup> A characteristic of episode I is the vertical dimension. God's rain comes from above and falls down, but it is lacking; the *ed* wells up from below and is indeed present. The *ed* wells up from the bowels of the *erets* to irrigate the *adama*. A horizontal dimension has often been discovered in Gen 2-3 which has been referred to as "a quest for the centre".<sup>34</sup> The vertical dimension from below upwards has not been noticed in literature.

(d) + (e) There is no relation between man and earth with respect to *work and food* here yet, because man does not yet exist and God has not made it rain yet. Therefore neither of the conditions for the growth of plants or the food supply has been fulfilled. However, the very fact that these conditions are mentioned means that a semantic trajectory for change has been plotted.

In short, the kernel semes which determine the relation between man and the earth in this episode refer to the water supply (a large quantity, undifferentiated), plants (lacking), spatial arrangements (general, undifferentiated, disorderly) and the relation of man and earth with respect to work and food (lacking). They all have a common denominator: /lacking differentiation, relations and arrangement/.

#### =Episode II: 2:7-25=

The relation between man and earth, as indicated in episode I, changes considerably in 2:7-25. Instead of a general, but as yet absent relation between man and earth, a specific relation between man and (the earth inside) the garden develops. In verses 7 and 8, which are closely related by inclusio, man is formed out of the dust of the earth and immediately linked to the garden.<sup>35</sup> This gives a new meaning to the relation between man and earth.

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<sup>32</sup> The existence of *adama* inside the garden is proved by verse 2:9, in which the trees in the garden are made from the *adama* in the garden and verse 2:19, in which the animals are made from the *adama* in the garden.

<sup>33</sup> The existence of *adama* outside the garden is proved by 2:5-7: the earth existed even before the garden was created; 3:17-19: man has to till the earth outside the garden; 3:23-24: man is expelled from the garden to till the earth outside the garden; there is a reference in 3:23 to 2:7.

<sup>34</sup> See Jobling 1980.1986 and Culley 1980.

<sup>35</sup> Landy (1983:198-199) assumes on the basis of 2:7 that man existed independently of the garden in the beginning, and retains an awareness of this period. But this is contradicted by the text: man is made first (2:7), then the garden (2:8a) in which man is immediately placed (2:8b). This refers back to 2:7. The development of the garden then follows in 2:9ff. A closer involvement does not seem possible and there is no mention of an awareness of a period prior to the garden.

(a) *The water supply* in the garden is indicated in 2:10 and this verse is parallel to 2:6. In both verses all emphasis is on the subject *ed* flood and *nahar* river as a result of the unusual order of the verb after the subject. Both are responsible for the water supply and as such fulfil an elementary and necessary condition to make a relation between man and earth, *adam* and *adama*, possible. It is not for nothing that in the verses 2:10–14 so much attention is paid to this river and its four branches. As have been stated before (6.1.4) this attention to the water supply of the garden and the earth in 2:10–14 presupposes an iconic relation, a relation indirectly motivated by the reality of the intended reader and in this reality lack of water is a known phenomenon.

The difference between the water supply in 2:6 *ed* and in 2:10–14 is considerable. In the first place the vertical water supply (*ed*) is from now on permanently replaced by a horizontal one. The attention is turned towards the earth *adama* and the vegetation. In the second place the absolute or massive forms of water supply, such as rain and subterranean flood, are replaced by a more structured and differentiated kind of water management. The river is less general and undifferentiated in its operation than the flood from the bowels of the earth. The addition of verse 10b to 10a, which has been shown to correspond with verse 6, together with the representation of the division of the river into four streams or branches, and the description of each of those branches in verses 2:11–14, make clear the great difference with the disorganized and undifferentiated *ed* of 2:6. The river which irrigates the garden abundantly and from there the rest of the earth, divides the earth into four distinctive areas and so ensures a structuring of the earth (cf. *erets* which occurs three times in 2:11–14). In the third place the syntactic sentence structure of 2:10a *we nahar yotse* “and a river came out of the garden”, points to the independence of the river and her operations. This is apparent from the fact that the subject comes first, which stresses its newness, and from the verb forms. Unlike the imperfecta consecutiva of the preceding verses which always had God as its subject, we find a participle and an imperfect with the river as their subject. The participle in 2:10 shows, as do the participles in the verses 11–14, that the described actions continue unto the present time of the narrator and the (intended) reader. The imperfect points to the recurrent character of the actions in the past. These are syntactic indications that the river, like the flood, acts with a fair amount of autonomy. However, from a semantic point of view it may be opposed that God himself has helped to determine the river indirectly, in so far as he has made the garden, including the waters. But the text does not offer any explicit information about God’s influence in 2:10–14.

(b) The kind of *vegetation* has changed as well, for there are no longer shrubs or bushes, but trees which God makes grow. Like man, these trees

originate from the earth (*min ha-adama*) and are related to him, for they are described as attractive to look at and good to eat of (2:9,16). However, two trees are different from the rest because of their place in the centre of the garden. One of them, the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, is forbidden to man (2:17).<sup>36</sup>

(c) The *spatial arrangement* also shows a different picture. After the general and unspecified arrangement of episode I all attention is directed towards the concrete and specific, to the *adama* and the garden in Eden as part of it, to the river and its four structuring branches. This specificity and the structuring are reinforced by the extensive geographical description of 2:11–14.<sup>37</sup> Following Vriezen (1937:134) and Landy (1983:195) these verses can be interpreted both geographically and symbolically. Geographically, because the intended reader is well acquainted with at least two of the four branches, the Euphrates and the Tigris. Symbolically, because these two branches together with the two other streams can indicate the four points of the compass (Pishon - Gichon = south-west; Euphrates - Tigris = north-east) and so together suggest universality (Landy 1983:195). Both interpretations presuppose the iconic relations the reader acknowledges between text and the reality he lives in. On the textual level these two interpretations reinforce in the reader one and the same kernel semic content, viz. the arrangement of the garden and the earth and an abundance of water in the garden and outside it. The name Eden also has a geographical as well as a symbolic significance. This name functions as an obvious sign and presents to the reader the meaning of wealth and enjoyment, on the one hand because the word *eden* is a noun of the stem *edan* to be pleasant, and on the other because the description of the garden with its profusion of water and trees represents abundance. The description of the garden also makes it clear to what extent the garden is determined by relations. As to its origin and vegetation it is directly dependent on God; it is supplied with water by a river which is to a large extent independent and which is only indirectly dependent on God; it depends on man for its maintenance and tilling, in other words for continuation and stability (2:15).

(d) The relation of man to the earth in the garden of Eden is one of maintenance and *tilling*. The feminine suffix *-ah* in *le-obdah*, to till her, and in *le-šomrah*, to guard her, can refer either to the name Eden or

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<sup>36</sup> The semantic content of this tree is studied in section 6.6.

<sup>37</sup> There are three interpretations of these verses 2:11–14. The first is referential and interprets 2:11–14 as a geographical description. The second is symbolic; in the course of the time more and more exegetes have adopted this interpretation, including Driver, Gunkel, Jacob, Cassuto, von Rad and Westermann. The third interpretation is a combination of the previous two and is represented by Vriezen and Landy.

to the *adama*, but cannot refer to the garden because it is grammatically masculine. Normally speaking the feminine suffix in 2:15 is too far removed from 2:8 to refer to the *adama* in 2:8. But as 2:15 explicitly picks up the line of the story of 2:8 and continues it,<sup>38</sup> it is very probable that the suffix *-ah* refers to the *adama*. Man is responsible for the tilling of the earth inside the garden of Eden. In episode I mention was made only of a tilling of the earth in absentia, whereas in episode II it becomes clear that man has to till and to guard the earth inside the garden and that the *adama* in the garden is dependent on man.

(e) Man in his turn also has to rely on the earth in the garden: his labour, *food* and enjoyment depend on the garden. The trees provide his food and the importance of this food is already apparent in *akal* (to eat), which occurs five times. There is plenty of good food in the garden; all trees except one provide it.

In short, the kernel semes which in this episode define the relation between man and earth and which relate to the water supply, the vegetation, the spatial arrangement, the work and food relations, all share the same characteristics, which can be described as: /preliminary and partial differentiation, relations and arrangement/.

### =Episode III: 3:1-7=

The next episode also takes place in the garden of Eden and likewise deals with the relation between man and earth inside the garden. There is, however, a major development with respect to the previous episode.

(a) The *water supply* is no longer mentioned.

(b) There is a development of man's relation towards the *vegetation*. After the serpent in 3:1 has claimed that all trees are forbidden, woman in 3:2-3 replies that they are allowed to eat of all trees except those in the centre of the garden. It finally transpires in 3:4-7 that all attention is exclusively directed towards the tree in the centre of the garden and that this is really the only tree which is used for food. In other words it is possible to see a development from a disjunction relation with all trees

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<sup>38</sup> A lot has been written about the parallelism of 2:8 and 2:15. Exegetes from the redaction critic school point to this parallelism to support their view that 2:8 and 2:15 originate from different traditions. Others (e.g. Westermann 1974) explain the resemblance between 2:8 and 2:15 on the basis of the extensive description in 2:10-14. In this explanation Gen 2:15 picks up the line of the story after the digression of 2:10-14 and so repeats some of the elements of 2:8. Stoebe (1953:190-192) demonstrates that the combination of *sim*, (2:8 to put) and *nuaḥ* (2:15 to place) with a person as the object is not unusual in texts of the Hebrew Bible and in these cases the two terms complement each other. In the opinion of Stoebe, verse 2:15 is not a repetition but a reinforcement and extension of 2:8 in the sense of "to leave it to the responsibility of".

( $\bar{A}$ ), to a conjunction relation with all trees except the one in the centre of the garden ( $\bar{B}$ ), and finally to a conjunction relation with the tree in the centre of the garden ( $\bar{B}$ ).

(c) The *spatial arrangement* shows an increasing specification: from the general and the undetermined (I), via Eden and the garden in Eden in general (II), to the centre of the garden (III). All attention is now directed towards the one tree in the centre of the garden.

(d) The *tilling* and maintenance of the earth in the garden is no longer mentioned.

(e) This *eating* is emphasized, but this eating is completely detached from working: the term to eat *akal* occurs in this brief episode no less than seven times, with particular reference to the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, the fruits of which are described in every respect as desirable and good.

In short, the preliminary differentiation of episode II is not continued in episode III, but is ignored or denied. The changes are considerable: from /the centre of the garden/ to /the centre of the garden/, from /all trees except the tree in the centre/ to /the tree in the centre of the garden/, from a relation in which /to work/ is central to a relation in which /to eat/ is central.

#### =Episode IV: 3:8–24=

Although man is expelled from the garden only at the end of episode IV, the larger part of this episode ( 3:14–22) anticipates this event. Now new and definitive conditions for the relation between man and earth are installed.

(a) The *water supply* of the earth is not explicitly mentioned in this episode, but the reader already has this information indirectly from episode II. It appears from 2:10 that a river irrigates the garden and divides into four branches outside the garden, so that the earth outside the garden can be structured and provided with water. Moreover, it can be derived from 3:18 that the irrigation by a branch is much less abundant than the water supplied by the main river in the garden. In spite of man's toil there is no abundance of water and vegetation, as was the case in the garden. God's influence is undeniable (3:17–19).

(b) The *vegetation* changes considerably compared to episode II and III. Instead of a garden with trees that are attractive to look at and to eat of, now the earth outside the garden yields but a poor crop. Moreover, the crop does not grow independently of man, but everything the earth yields has become dependent on the maintenance and tilling of man. The mutual dependence of man and vegetation has increased considerably.

(c) Episode I opened with a total picture of the earth and heaven (*erets we-šamayim*) (2:4b) and the earth as a whole (*erets*)(2:5-6). Gradually the text concentrated on the relation between man and earth or soil (*adama*) (2:7ff). In 2:15-3:8 all attention was directed to a garden which was *miqgedem*, far away in time and space. And now episode IV finally deals with the concrete and tangible soil man is confronted with every day. In this last episode man and earth, vegetation and irrigation have become inextricably entwined. The clearest expression of this can be found in 3:17-19 and 3:23-24: man is of earth and will return to it, and during the time between his beginning and his end he is tied to the earth hand and foot. The time reference in 3:17, every day of your life, reinforces this link: the link between man and the earth is not temporary but continuous and for life.

(d) From the *tilling* and guarding of the garden in episode II and III, only the tilling remains in episode IV. Instead of the easy task of tilling and protecting the garden, man is required to do the much more arduous task of tilling the earth. The trees which grew independently of man are replaced by crops which are dependent on man's attention. The mutual dependence between man and the vegetation on the earth has therefore increased considerably. The earth is dependent on being tilled by man, man is dependent on the fruit yielded by the earth. But this mutual dependence and increased strong attachment is in inverse proportion to the result: if at first a little labour produced much fruit, now a lot of wearisome labour produces only poor fruit, thorns and thistles. Furthermore the task of guarding has been taken over by the kerubim. The guarding by man has been replaced by a guarding of the kerubim against man. The kerubim establish and make permanent the separation between garden and arable soil. From now on return is no longer possible.

(e) The new link between working and *eating* is now very clear. Eating was a separate function of man in episode II, independent of working (2:9 and 2:15), and this link was completely lost in episode III. In episode IV (3:17-19) however this relation reappears and is reinforced. Working has become toiling, the abundance of food has turned into a meager and poor supply of food. Working and eating are closely linked from now on. This close connection is expressed in the text itself because of the link made between toil, pain and trouble on the one hand and working and eating on the other.<sup>39</sup>

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<sup>39</sup> In this sense it seems incorrect that the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* proposes the reading *abad* (to work) instead of *akal* (to eat) in 3:17.

In short, in episode IV the relation between man and earth inside the garden as it existed before in episode II and III has been replaced for good by a relation between man and the earth outside the garden. The relation of dependence introduced in episode I is realized and reinforced in episode IV: man in his beginning and end and during his life is dependent on the earth for work and food and the earth is dependent on man for yielding plants and crop.

In conclusion one can say that the kernel semic contents of the relation between *adam* and *adama* from episode I to IV shows a development which can be summarized as follows:

1. There is a clear concentric movement running from episode I (the earth and the heaven) to II (the garden in Eden), and from II (the garden in Eden) to III (the centre of the garden). In episode IV this concentric movement, the quest for the centre, is interrupted and replaced permanently by a non-concentric movement.

2. There is a development from the general, the undifferentiated and the unstructured (I), via the general and the provisionally structured (II), and a disregard or denial of this (III), to the concrete, the differentiated, the structured and the structuring (IV).

3. The most important development is from the more or less disconnected and autonomous to the relational. In other words, in Gen 2-3 a development can be seen from situations in which the characters act and function independently and in which the events are unrelated, to situations in which the actions and events are determined by their mutual relations. In the beginning the irrigation is autonomous, God is working independently, the trees grow independently of man, while man is linked indirectly to the earth through the trees and the garden, and man's food is not related to his labour. At the end of the text on the other hand, there is a close and fundamental connection between all things. God is partly responsible for the water supply, man is partly responsible for the vegetation, and food and labour are closely related, so that in the end a direct relation of dependence between *adam* and *adama* has come into existence.

The results of this analysis of the elements of meaning which form the constituents or materials of the isotopy the relation between man and the earth in Gen 2-3 can be represented in the following semiotic square.

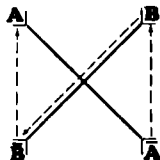


#### IV 3:8-24

Definitive differentiation,  
relation and arrangement:  
Water supply: small amount, 1  
differentiated and ordered  
Earth outside the garden 2  
Working: 3  
heavy and continual  
Food: meagre and poor, 4  
dependent on work

#### II 2:7-25

Provisional differentiation,  
relation and arrangement:  
1 Water supply: plentiful,  
differentiated and ordered  
2 Earth within the garden  
3 Guarding and working:  
light and continual  
4 Food: a lot and good  
independent of working



#### III 3:1-7

Provisional differentiation,  
relation and arrangement:  
— 1  
  
— 2  
Guarding and working 3  
Food: not much but good 4  
independent of working

#### I 2:4b-6

Lack of differentiation,  
relation and order:  
1 Water supply: plentiful,  
undifferentiated and disordered  
2 Earth and heaven in general  
3 Working  
4 Food: none

### 6.3.3 Final remarks

The relation between *adam* and *adama* is given shape by means of temporal and spatial classemes which form the general basis of Gen 2-3 and by kernel semes which define the specific contents of this isotopy. All these kernel semes have specified and reinforced the link between *adam* and *adama*. But the reader need not become aware of this strong tie between man and earth until the end of the text. Already the very first beginning, verse 2:5b, confronts the reader with the two terms *adam* and *adama* and the striking resemblance between them. This resemblance is a phonetic and sememic icon, a representative quality which offers the reader the possibility to attach a new meaning to the text. Gen 2-3 makes use of the Hebrew linguistic code in which *adam* means "man" and *adama* "earth". On the basis of his knowledge of the linguistic code, which is founded on symbolic or conventional sign relations, the reader can assign meaning to Gen 2-3. By using *adam* and *adama* side by side right from the start,

Gen 2-3 exploits the linguistic code in a characteristic way and offers the reader the possibility to attribute meaning to the individual character of the text by means of the iconic relation. It is up to the reader to make use of this possibility and to attribute meaning to it. When reading the rest of the text it will then appear if the reader has attributed the right value to the terms *adam* and *adama*. On the basis of the iconic quality the reader arrives at a hypothetical or abductive reasoning which is tested by reading the subsequent textual segments or by inductive and deductive reasoning. Consequently, reading a text is a pendulating movement between text and reader and meaning is the result of the interaction between these two. In this interaction the text offers conventional and more or less original sign relations; the reader follows the conventional relations and formulates hypotheses or abductions concerning contents that are specific to the text, while the iconic qualities of the text offer him the possibilities and basis of these hypotheses.

## 6.4 The Analysis of the Relation between Man and Animal

### 6.4.1 The General Basis

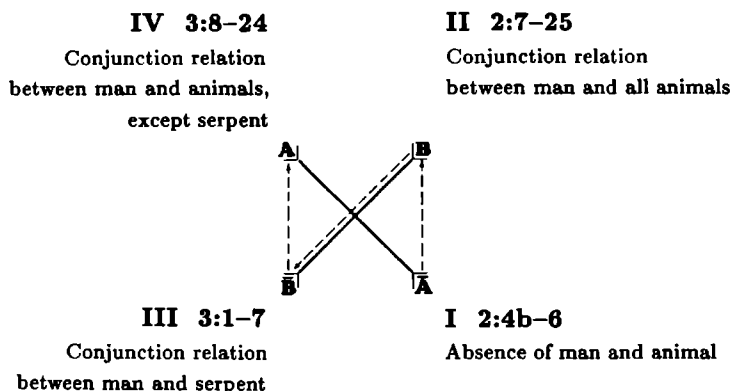
A third general culturally determined code which the text presents to the reader in the *classemes* refers to the relation between man and animal. It is clear that this cultural code presupposes a geographically, biologically and mythologically defined world of experience which makes itself felt in the contents of the isotopy in the text.

The relation between man and animal is different in the various parts of Gen 2-3. In the initial situation (2:4b-6) there are no animals or man, so that there is no relation between them either. In the following garden episode (2:7-25) God creates man (2:7) and all animals for the benefit of man (2:18-20).<sup>40</sup> The term *all* (*kol*) is repeated five times to emphasize that a relation between man and all animals is referred to. In the third episode (3:1-7) only one animal is mentioned: the serpent. In the fourth and last episode (3:8-24) both the serpent and (indirectly in 3:21) the other animals occur. From that moment the relation between man and the serpent is a hostile one, the relation between man and the other animals is not.

The isotopy "the relation between man and animal" in Gen 2-3 is based on a number of *classemes* which form the general framework within which certain aspects are made concrete and definite by means of kernel

<sup>40</sup> In 2:19 mention is made of all the animals of the field and all the birds in the sky; in 2:20 of all cattle, all the birds in the sky and all life in the field. The fish are not mentioned in either verse.

semic relations. This classemic basis can be represented in the following semiotic square.



#### 6.4.2 The Specific Contents

The kernel semes which define the specific contents of the relation between man and animal in Gen 2-3 concern four aspects in this relation, namely: (a) *help and enmity* (b) *nakedness and shrewdness* (c) *clothing* and (d) *the correlation between man-animal and God-man*. The kernel semes or values will successively dealt with by means of the textual episodes of Gen 2-3. There is no need to discuss episode I as man and animals do not occur there.

=Episode II: 2:7-25=

(a) God creates the animals in 2:19. The creation of the animals takes place in a similar way to that of the trees and man.<sup>41</sup> God creates them all out of earth *min ha-adama*, but there are a few differences to be noticed in the description. The earth is mentioned first when the creation of the animals and the trees is described. But in the description of the creation of man, man is mentioned first. The link between man and earth is described in more indirect terms: man is made of dust of the earth *apar min ha-adama* and the others are made directly out of the earth. Only, the animals and man are called living beings (*nepeš ḥayya*) in Gen 2-3, not the trees.

<sup>41</sup> See Cassuto (1961) ad verses 2:7.9.19: as the redactor of Gen 2-3 wished to indicate a parallelism between the contents of 2:9 and 2:19 he placed *min ha-adama* first in both verses, followed by *kol* without *et*.

God initiated the creation of the animals to help man (2:18). The terms help *ezer* and corresponding to him *kenegdo* in 2:18 do not at all imply subordination,<sup>42</sup> neither does the naming of the animals by man in 2:20. The question is in what way the animals are a help in episode II. They can assist in the tilling of the earth (2:15), or help to alleviate man's loneliness (2:18). Episode II does not provide an answer to this question. The animals do not yet function as helpers (2:20), but a semantic openness is created in this episode for a situation in which the animals can function as the helpers of man.

(b) and (c) At the end of this episode man's *nakedness* and his lack of *clothing* is mentioned: "and the two of them were naked (*arumim*) man and his wife, and they felt no shame" (2:25). At first this condition does not bear directly on man's relation with the animals. The significance it has for this relation does not become clear until episodes III and IV. This verse describes the initial situation of the subsequent actions and it also contains the conditions for changes which are to take place. So Gen 2:25 creates a semantic openness, in which the condition of nakedness and clothing can change into one of nakedness and clothing.

(d) The relation between man and animal cannot be detached from the relation between God and man: there is a *correlation* between the two. It is God who says of his own accord that something is *lo tob* not right.<sup>43</sup> Man himself did not feel or express the need for help, but God thought this necessary or useful for him. Apart from the fact that God takes the initiative and creates the animals himself, he also encourages man to give names to the animals after he has created them. These three aspects of individual initiative, creating independently and encouraging to give names, emphasize that God is the one who determines everything and who encourages man to enter into a relation with his environment and with the animals. This is the sense in which 2:20b *le-adam lo matsa ezer kenegdo* should also be taken. It says literally: "but for man He did not find a help corresponding to him".<sup>44</sup> Taking into account the normal

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<sup>42</sup> Cf. Vriezen 1937:163f and Ska 1984:234ff. In many texts of the Hebrew Bible, notably Psalms, God is called man's *ezer* (help). Nobody concludes from this that God is therefore inferior to man.

<sup>43</sup> Compare this with Gen 1 where everything is *tob* good and *tob me'od* very good.

<sup>44</sup> Most exegetes translate *le-* by a reflexive or passive form (in the last case the verb is changed in a nifal) or they interpret it as a proleptic *le-*, so that man is the subject in both 20a and 20b. The basis for these three interpretations is that 2:20b is an unusual and a problematic construction, for which a solution has to be found. Only very few exegetes consider 2:20b as a normal construction, in which *le-* functions as an indirect object and man is not the subject of the verb. The Art Scroll Series Bereshis I:107: "but as for man, he did not find a helper corresponding to him", and Genesis Rabbah appear not to take man as the subject, but YHWH God.

syntactic construction in which *le-* before a person presents an indirect object, YHWH God is the subject of the verb *matsa* to find and man the indirect object: God did not find a help for man. In this interpretation 2:20b continues the line that starts with 2:18. "And YHWH God said: it is not good for man to be alone...(2:18). And YHWH God created the animals, brought them to man to see what he would call them (2:19a) and as man would call them, this would be their name (2:19b), and man called them... (2:20a). But as for man, He did not find a help corresponding to him (2:20b)." Man is the subject of the actions in 2:19b and 2:20a, but this acting only concern the naming of the animals. Verse 2:20b continues the story, in which God is the one who makes and creates. This is all the more likely, as up to now only God has said in an interior monologue (2:18) that man needed an *ezer kenegdo*, whereas man does not know this yet. Only in 2:23, when woman has been created, man discovers what an *ezer kenegdo* is. God is the one who acts independently and encourages man to enter into a relation with his environment. This is confirmed by the phrase in 2:20b. But man does not enter into a direct relation with the animals, nor does he assume an autonomous attitude: he merely reacts to God's initiative.

In short: in episode II the relation man-animal is defined by various kernel semes. The animals do not just function in a conjunction relation with man, but they are created to be man's helpers. However, they do not yet function as such for man: /help/. Other kernel semes are: nakedness, /knowledge/, /clothing/, and these create a semantic openness to changes in the following episodes.

### =Episode III: 3:1-7=

The general relation between man and all animals in episode II, is restricted in 3:1-7 to the specific relation between man and only one animal: the serpent.

(a) The serpent *naḥaš* is presented in 3:1. As with the introduction of independently acting phenomena like *ed* flood (2:6) and *nahar* river (2:10), this introduction is also given syntactic expression in the order of subject and verb and a verb form which is not, unlike most other verb forms, an *imperfectum consecutivum*. This syntactic construction indicates that the preceding actions are not continued and that there is a new subject, the serpent, which receives the emphasis. The beginning of the episode shows that on the one hand the serpent is an animal like the other animals, and like them created by God, on the other hand it is an animal which is unlike all other animals because of its remarkable shrewdness, which is mentioned

in 3:1 as a characteristic of the serpent and which is evident in 3:1–5 in what it says to woman. This characteristic of knowledge or shrewdness can turn the serpent into the helper or enemy of man.

### **Excursus: The serpent**

Much has been written about the question whether the serpent in Gen 2–3 is an helper or an enemy, bringer of life or death, of chaos or order, of knowledge or ignorance. In order to provide some insight into the similarities and differences between the conclusions of a semiotic analysis and those of traditional exegesis, and also to be able to judge the merits of the following semiotic analysis of 3:1–7 and the serpent, it is necessary to present a summary of a few recent and well argued studies of the serpent in this excursus.<sup>45</sup>

1. Vriezen (1937:173-180) offers probably the most extensive and thorough study of the serpent. He discusses (a) the general presentation of the serpent as it appears from biblical and extra-biblical texts of the ancient Middle East and (b) the way in which the writer of Gen 2–3 assimilates this general presentation in the text.

(a) According to Vriezen, the serpent cannot be interpreted as a mythological (chaotic or anti-godly) creature, nor as a dualistic animal representing both life and death. The serpent is not a symbol of death in the semitic world. More important, it is not the serpent but God who brings death in Gen 2–3, for God punishes man with death. The serpent itself is not an enemy of man, but enmity between the serpent and man is of God's making (3:14–15). The serpent may, however, be interpreted as a magic animal of life and wisdom, which according to Vriezen, is apparent from texts like 2 Kings 18:4 and Numbers 21:9, in which there is mention of a brass serpent in the temple. Because the serpent sheds its skin and renews itself each time, it is an animal of life. Consequently in the Canaanite, Phoenician, Egyptian and Babylonian world the serpent represents fertility, life-giving power or sheer life.

(b) This general presentation of the serpent as an animal of life and an animal of wisdom has been used by the author of Gen 2–3. He did so not because he agreed with this presentation, but because he wanted to present a polemic contrast and challenge the image. For this serpent is a tempter of man, since it leads and seduces man to a desire to know and be like God. It is this very temptation which the author disapproves of. That is why the serpent is cursed: from the wisest animal it becomes the most despised creature.

2. Westermann (1970:322ff) follows Vriezen in (a) but disagrees with him about (b). How can it be alleged that the Yahwist attributes a hostile and misleading power to the serpent, whereas the serpent in 3:1 is explicitly called a creature of God? If the Yahwist really considered the serpent hostile to God he would not have been able to write this verse. According to Westermann the serpent is not hostile to God. The serpent merely plays its part in the whole of the transgression: it is the mysterious

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<sup>45</sup> For a good survey of the various earlier interpretations of the serpent see Vriezen 1937:172ff.

solution to the question concerning the origin of evil. Evil does not spring from man or from God but from a mysterious phenomenon like the serpent.<sup>46</sup>

3. Joines (1975) describes the serpent as a symbol of life (or regenerated youth), wisdom and chaos. For the first two symbolic meanings she offers a good deal of comparative textual material, for the latter she does not offer a single biblical text and few extra-biblical texts.<sup>47</sup> She concludes: "The serpent of Gen 3 represents the embodiment of a strange combination of life, wisdom and chaos. The underlying purpose of this serpent is to deceive and to destroy mankind; consequently, it basically symbolizes chaos. (...) Apparently<sup>48</sup> the original design of the serpent is that man should become immortal (...) a divine being like the Creator." (p.9).

4. Landy (1983:228-245) does not work with a comparative mythological method, but more from a general psychological and psychoanalytical framework. He does not systematically describe meanings but offers continually different dimensions in the text and in this way evokes an image of the serpent in evocative language. According to Landy, a basic fact concerning the serpent is that it mediates between opposites. The serpent, for example, mediates between naked and shrewd. In the beginning the animals were shrewd and man was naked, at the end and as a result of the actions of the serpent the animals eventually become naked and man shrewd.<sup>49</sup> The serpent is also the instrument of death and the antagonist of woman, who gives life.<sup>50</sup> According to Landy the serpent is an ambiguous creature, but he especially emphasizes the destructive, the chaotic and the evil aspects.<sup>51</sup> He refers to Joines to present the serpent as a symbol of chaos, but he adds that it is the destructive principle of the serpent which determines the generation of new life. The knowledge or wisdom of the serpent is a knowledge which produces chaos, a seditious chaos. And then Landy comes to the crux of his argumentation: what does this chaotic, destructive and seditious power of the serpent consist in, which on the one hand represents life and wisdom, but which on the other hand brings especially death, deception and enmity? It consists in the fact that the serpent questions everything and by doing so brings a plurality of meanings into the world. "To the serpent, and henceforth to the imagination, everything is possible, an

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<sup>46</sup> Westermann does not supply any information from the text for this last interpretation. Nor does he offer other arguments in support of his interpretation.

<sup>47</sup> Joines does not know Vriezen's book (which was written in Dutch) nor his arguments against the serpent as a symbol of chaos. A foundation based on biblical texts for this view of the serpent as an image of chaos is lacking.

<sup>48</sup> The word "apparently" occurs frequently in Joines (1975) and on each occasion it acts as a substitute for the evidence.

<sup>49</sup> It is problematic that the animals at the beginning of Gen 2-3 are nowhere called shrewd; only the serpent is shrewd. Neither is it stated at the end that the animals are naked.

<sup>50</sup> Landy does not know Vriezen's study (written in Dutch) and his arguments against this dualistic notion.

<sup>51</sup> Landy does not offer any evidence for his argument in the form of references to Gen 2-3 or references to other biblical or extra-biblical texts.

open question. (...) What he does is to introduce the plurality of meaning, the intrinsic ambiguity, and hence deceptiveness of the world. Now the anarchic implications are clearer. The serpent incites rebellion, tempting the woman "to become like God", to overthrow the established hierarchy. He does this by presenting her with the confusion of the world, that the unthinkable is possible. He transmits his venom to us, which is not merely mortality, but a permanent dissatisfaction. Man becomes a curious, analytic creature, reducing forms to constituents, synthesis to hypothesis." (232).<sup>52</sup>

(b) At the end of episode II (2:25) it is stated that man and his wife are naked *arummim*. In the verse immediately following (the beginning of episode III, 3:1) it is stated that the serpent is shrewd, crafty or knowing *arum*. As such *erom* is "naked" (see 3:10,11), and its plural form is *erummim* (see 3:7). *arum* is shrewd (see 3:1) and the plural form is *arummim*. In 2:25 *arummim*, the plural of *arum* is used intentionally as a plural of *erom*, to make a relation visible between *erom* naked and *arum* shrewd.<sup>53</sup> This relation between shrewd or knowing and naked, between *arum* and *arummim* forms the pivot in Gen 2-3 of the transformation of Gen 2 to Gen 3. The reader is able to attribute meaning to the transformation which takes place here on the basis of the phonetic similarity between *arummim* and *arum*, in other words on the basis of the phonetic iconic quality of the text. That there is more at stake than an arbitrary pun and that there has been a conscious introduction of the iconic relation is apparent from the chosen plural form *arummim*. It is partly because of the serpent's action that at the end of episode III (3:7) man and his wife have become aware of themselves and know that they are naked. The parallelism between the end of episode II, 2:25, and the last verse of III, 3:7 is obvious. They share the same sentence structure and the words *šenehem* the two of them and *arummim* naked, which make the difference immediately striking: in 2:25 they do not know, in 3:7 they do know. In 2:25 nakedness goes hand in hand with not-knowing, whereas in 3:7 it goes hand in hand with knowing and this knowledge is partly brought about by the serpent who is the prototype of knowing and shrewdness (3:1).

The serpent's knowledge is closely related to not-dying or living (3:4),

<sup>52</sup> Landy offers a surprisingly negative picture of thinking, knowing, analysis and hypothesis on pp 230-232. He seems to be the prototype of an anti-semiotician. Throughout the course of his entire book he likes to use the word "ambiguous" frequently to indicate the beauty and complexity of a text and in that sense, ambiguity carries a positive connotation for him. But when the serpent itself or the world picture which the serpent offers is open and ambiguous, it has a negative connotation: it expresses chaos and rebellion. Landy's preference for hierarchy and established order thus becomes clear. In other words, ambiguity is to him acceptable in the aesthetic sense only; it must not threaten the established and given order in any way.

<sup>53</sup> This is even more obvious in Hebrew: ערום, ערום.



to an opening of the eyes (3:5a) and to God's knowledge (3:5b). The relation between the serpent and life in general is obvious,<sup>54</sup> because the serpent which sloughs its skin is the sign of ever renewing life. In Gen 2-3 it is also the serpent which posits and presents life, while death is not established until the following episode. The latter does not happen through the agency of the serpent, but as a result of God's action.<sup>55</sup> In her conversation with woman it becomes clear that the serpent wants to open the eyes of woman to this ever renewing life. Her questioning makes that woman wants to see for herself. It is not for nothing that this looking, already confirmed in 2:9 as a function of man which God judged positively, is once again emphasized. The serpent wants to stimulate woman's looking and seeing (3:4-5) and the first thing woman does in 3:6 is indeed looking and seeing. On the basis of this seeing woman arrives at the decision to eat and her husband joins her in this. The consequence of this eating is that their eyes are opened and that they become aware. It does not say that they notice their nakedness, rather that the realization dawned upon them (*yada*) that they are naked (3:7). Seeing their nakedness gives them knowledge about the difference between man and woman. This knowledge about the differences is the basis of procreation, of the renewal of life. As the knowledge of the serpent with reference to the tree of knowledge (3:5) is closely related to life and to the renewing dimension of life, so the knowledge of man and woman is closely related to their procreative or life renewing capacity. The term *yada* is used here in these very two meanings: knowing in the sense of discerning and knowing in the sense of carnal knowledge, sexual intercourse.

The words *erom/arummim* and *arum* function as the visible carriers or iconic signs of a fundamental textual contents: their iconic relation enables the reader to detect a correspondence between being naked, seeing, knowing and giving life. *yada* also clearly presents to the reader the two aspects of knowing and knowing carnally. The knowledge which man and woman acquire concerns life giving and *yada* represents both sides of this knowledge, the power of discernment and the power to create life. This knowledge, this power to create life makes man similar to God, because it is in this knowledge and this procreative power that man and woman approach both God's knowledge, his creative power. In this episode the similarity to God is expressed only by the serpent, whereas in the next episode this interpretation by the serpent is confirmed by God. This shows the extent to which all textual elements are related. Serpent, man and woman correspond with each other at the end of episode III, because they

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<sup>54</sup> This is the only element which, as appears from the excursus, is accepted and acknowledged by all exegetes.

<sup>55</sup> See Vriezen 1937:177.

are naked and aware of it, i.e. see and know it. They are connected with life and know how to reproduce themselves in a new life; the serpent as the animal of life and wisdom has opened man's eyes to this.

(c) In episode II *clothing* was absent, but in episode III aprons of fig leaves are mentioned. But the fig leaves themselves are insufficient to cover the entire body. The word aprons indicates that this form of clothing served only to cover the genitals, since nakedness cannot be cancelled out by means of aprons. The text itself points to this in 3:8, for man and woman hide from God. Furthermore, man says in 3:10 that he is naked and that that is why he has hidden himself. In short, the aprons have not done away with nakedness: man and woman continue to feel naked. The vegetable cover is therefore inadequate as clothing.

(d) Until now attention has only been paid to the positive sides of the relation between man and the serpent. The *correlation* between this relation, the relation between God and the serpent and the relation between God and man make it clear that apart from this positive side there is also a negative side.

The negative aspect of the serpent is not that he speaks an untruth. Everything the serpent says turns out to be true: man does not die by eating of the tree in itself; his eyes have been opened, he knows and as a result of this knowledge he has become godlike. In the last episode IV (3:22) God confirms that the serpent was right. Nor is the fact that he seduced woman, as woman herself says in 3:13, a negative aspect of the serpent. By his question and by his assertion the serpent stimulated woman to look, and on the basis of this looking and seeing woman has taken independently the decision to eat of the tree in the centre of the garden. So, when in 3:13 woman, questioned by God, accuses the serpent of having seduced her, this is to be taken as an attempt to exonerate herself rather than as a statement containing the truth.<sup>56</sup>

Consequently the negative side of the serpent is not that he speaks an untruth, but that he does not tell the whole truth. God is the one who, in his relation with the serpent and with man, makes clear in the following episode which part of the truth is lacking. In 3:4 the serpent emphasizes a life without death. In this episode he is proved to be right in so far as there is no immediate death. How wrong he is appears in the following episode, when God shows that there is death after life. In 3:5 the serpent suggests complete equality between God and man when he says to man that he "will be like God, knowing good and bad". In 3:22 it appears that man is only like God with respect to the knowledge of good and bad. The serpent suggests an equality between himself and God, and between himself and man, whereas in episode IV something totally different will be

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<sup>56</sup> See Vriezen 1937:177.

established. The serpent removes all differences and proclaims an absolute equality and continuity denying the differences: a life without death, no distinction between man and God, pure knowledge, no difference between man and the serpent.<sup>57</sup>

The serpent's deception is the totalitarian principle, the denial of differences and limits. Man became aware of this deception as early as 3:7b, that is to say even before God's acting. Man himself arrived at the insight that the acquired knowledge does not result in a continuity of life, but also in the experience of fragmentation or discontinuity in existence. The fact that he covers himself with fig leaves testifies to man's confusion resulting from the knowledge, although the serpent had presented that knowledge merely as something positive. In this way the serpent's representation of continuity is already exposed as false by man's reaction.

In short: in episode III the relation between man and serpent is defined by several kernel semes which appear to be characterized by two aspects. On the one hand the serpent functions as a help, insofar as he encourages to look, to see and to become aware and in so far as man as a result of that acquires the capacity to renew life. On the other hand the serpent is deceptive because of his totalitarian representation of affairs. Both aspects of the serpent are present in Gen 2-3 and both contribute to the semantic development. This development from episode II to episode III can be described as a development from /help/ to /help + deception/, from /nakedness/ to /nakedness/, from /knowledge/ to /knowledge/ and from /covering + clothing/ to /covering and clothing/.

=Episode IV: 3:8-24=

(a) + (c) The relation between man and the serpent is changed completely because of God's interference. From being the highest or most shrewd of all animals the serpent now becomes the lowest of all animals. The verses 3:1 and 3:14 are parallel to each other as a result of the analogous formulation; in 3:1 the serpent is described as the most shrewd of all the animals of the field and in 3:14 as the most cursed of all the animals of the field. This parallelism functions as a syntactic icon which the reader can use to interpret the transition from the serpent's initial situation to his final one. It then turns out that the serpent has changed from a helper and guide who puts himself on a par with man, to an enemy of man and a creature which crawls in the dust. Only one thing remains aloof from these changes, differentiations and discontinuity wrought by God: the continuation of

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<sup>57</sup> The serpent does not represent chaos, as is the view of Joines and Landy, for chaos is discontinuity. The serpent represents the opposite of chaos: complete continuity. As there are no differences or distinctions, everything has become equal.

existence through ever-renewing life. This appears from the text first and foremost from the description of a lasting enmity between the serpent and man (3:15). For this enmity will consist "between you (=the serpent) and woman, between your seed and her seed" (3:15). In this way God confirms the powers of procreation of both the serpent and man. It is also evident from 3:16 that woman is responsible for human survival, for ever-renewing life, and when she is given a new name in 3:20, it is precisely this life-giving function for which she is named. Now it is made clear why the serpent, as an animal which is connected with life and with knowledge concerning life, addresses woman when she speaks. She is presented in Gen 2-3 as the one who can acquire and realize the serpent's knowledge and who can give new life. In that sense the peculiar expression in 3:15 "her seed" *zarah* (*zera* with the female suffix *-ah*, her), i.e. the seed of woman, can be understood. Usually the term seed is used only in connection with the male,<sup>58</sup> but in this text continuing and renewing life is connected so closely with woman that this male characteristic is borne by her. This morphemic icon, *-ah* in connection with an essentially masculine term, offers the reader the possibility to notice the life-giving function of woman and to include it in his interpretation of the text.

The other animals do not become man's enemies. In 3:21 it is stated: "YHWH God made garments of (animal) skins for man and his wife and clothed them."<sup>59</sup> The Hebrew term for animal skin *or* shows similarity with *arum* and *erom*.<sup>60</sup> While the serpent helped man to become aware of his nakedness, now the other animals help him to cover that nakedness. As the serpent does not possess a furry skin, he is not suited to clothe man. But because of the frequent shedding of its skin, the serpent is suited for the function of intermediary of the knowledge of ever-renewing life. The complexity of the reader's interpretation can be made clear: on the basis of the linguistic code, the reader is able to assign meaning to the words *arum* and *erom*; on the basis of the phonetic similarity (iconic isomorphism), the

<sup>58</sup> BDB 282: *zera* occurs 220 times as noun in the Hebrew Bible. A number of times it refers to man and in these cases it means "semen virile" (Num 5:13,28; Lev 15:16,17,18,32; 18:20; 19:20; 22:4) and "offspring". In this latter meaning it is used only twice in connection with woman, viz. in Gen 3:15 and Gen 16:10; in other texts in Genesis it is used in connection with the patriarchs: "the seed of patriarchs" (especially the seed of Abraham): 12:17; 13:15,16,18; 15:13,18; 21:12; 22:17,17,18; 24:7; 26:3,4,4,4,24; 28:13,14,14 and 32:13. In other books of the Hebrew Bible seed occurs in the meaning of nation or people, but nowhere is it connected with woman. Clearly, therefore, the connection of *zera* with woman in Gen 3:15 and Gen 16:10 is quite unique.

<sup>59</sup> Jacob (1934) considers verse 3:21 to be the climax of the story of Gen 2-3. For him it is the missing link in the order of creation, because to him clothing represents the cultural, social and institutional embeddedness of man, or that which distinguishes man from the animals.

<sup>60</sup> In Hebrew characters this is evident: עור, ערום, עירם.

reader is able to assign meaning to textual relation between *arum* and *erom* in Gen 2-3; on the basis of the correspondence between text and reality (iconic motivation) the reader is able to assign meaning to the serpent as both *arum* (shrewd) and *erom* (naked) and to understand his function as renewer of life.

In episode II the possibility is mentioned that the animals can be the helpers (*ezer*) of man. From the context of this episode it might be inferred that the animals are meant as a help to till the earth or to alleviate man's loneliness. Man's loneliness has been solved by the appearance of another human being. It appears in episode IV that the animals are a help in the tilling of the earth, but in an unexpected way. The animals might be expected to be helpful in a direct sense as work or pack animals. But it appears that the animals help man indirectly in the tilling of the earth outside the garden, as suppliers of clothing.<sup>61</sup> The text takes it for granted that man needs clothing for his life outside the garden and the animals provide this clothing with their (fur and) skins. Therefore they are serving the relation man and earth in an indirect sense.

The semantic openness of episode II turns out to have been used in episode IV. This happened through the mediation of the serpent who in episode III appears as helper and deceiver at the same time. The serpent helps man in so far as he mediates in the acquisition of knowledge, the capacity to discriminate and the capacity to procreate. The serpent deceives man in so far as he sows the seed of doubt and suggests that this knowledge removes all distinctions, whereas in fact this knowledge reveals those very distinctions. With his help man acquires knowledge in episode III and IV, because of his deception the serpent has become man's enemy as a result of God's interference in episode IV. With the help of this knowledge man can till the earth, in spite of the enmity between the serpent and man. With the help of the other animals man acquires clothing in episode IV, in this way fulfilling yet another condition for tilling the earth.

(b) Man retains knowledge about nakedness, the differences between man and woman and the function of those differences for the renewal of life, which he acquired in episode III. But although the positive dimension of this knowledge remains intact in episode IV, all attention is directed towards the negative aspects that accompany it. In the first place man himself mentions a negative side of this awareness of his nakedness. He himself uses the word *erom* and immediately relates this to fear. Man

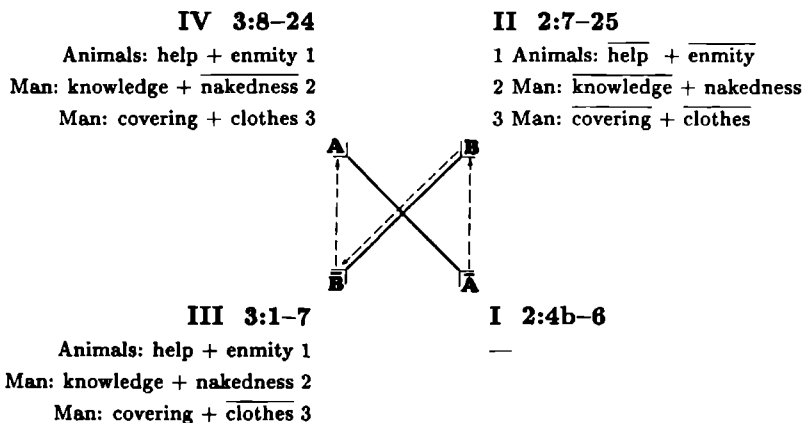
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<sup>61</sup> Another possibility might have been that the animals are man's food. But in Gen 2-3 the animals are not mentioned as food; according to 3:17-19 only the plants of the earth function in this way. A contrast may perhaps be formulated between the function of plants and the function of animals in Gen 2-3: the plants serve as food and the animals serve as clothing.

now experiences the differences between man and woman, between God and man, and the fact that these differences can evoke fear. He no longer experiences unity or continuity but discontinuity. In the second place God reinforces the negative dimensions: man's (carnal) knowledge and his production of children will be accompanied by pain and labour.

(d) The relation between man and the serpent, as well as that between man and the other animals, is completely determined by the relation between God and man. The serpent's deception consisted of the fact that he held up to man the totality of existence and an absolute continuity. God acknowledges continuity, but he also adds discontinuity. Man's life appears not to be just life, but a life confined by death, even though the species man reproduces itself in ever-renewing life. It remains possible to give life, but it is attended by pain and effort. The knowledge, awareness of life and the power to give life remain.

In short, the conjunction relation between man and the serpent which in episode III was characterized by a dimension of help and deception, has disappeared in episode IV to be changed into a relation of enmity. The conjunction relation between man and the other animals continues to exist, but as in episode II it was characterized by /help/, in episode IV it is changed into /help/. The animals are indirectly helpful to man in the tilling of the earth outside the garden, because they supply clothing. The semantic structure and the development of episode II ( $B$ ), via episode III ( $\bar{B}$ ), to episode IV ( $A$ ) can be represented in the following semiotic square.<sup>62</sup>



<sup>62</sup> In fact this is a composite square, based on a simple square, viz.  $A$ : help; knowing; covering;  $B$ : enmity; naked; clothing;  $\bar{B}$ : enmity; naked; clothing;  $\bar{A}$ : help; knowing; covering. Episode II unites  $\bar{A} + \bar{B}$ , episode III:  $A + \bar{B}$  and episode IV:  $A + B$ .

### 6.4.3 Final remarks

Having arrived at the conclusion of the semiotic analysis of the relation between man and animal it is perhaps useful to bring two of its aspects into focus, viz. the semantic openness of Gen 2-3 and the significance of the iconic sign relations to the reader. The aspects of semantic openness and iconicity are important to other isotopies, too, but because there are useful examples available in this analysis, their significance for the semiotic method and consequently also for the interpretation of Gen 2-3, can be made clear.

The previous analysis has made clear that episode II (2:7-25) is characterized by a considerable semantic openness. Because of this openness the semantic development is already present at the beginning of the text and this text episode in the garden of Eden has to be followed by changes in which that openness is exploited. So episode II is not static or complete, but instead provides the basis for changes. The statement that covering and clothes are lacking (in 2:25) contains the openness and, from a semantic point of view, the possibility of change, which consequently occurs gradually in III (covering but no clothes) and IV (covering and clothes). The statement in 2:20 that the animals are not acknowledged as a help, points forward to the moment when the animals do function as a help. Finally, there is the aspect of nakedness in combination with knowledge. Gen 2:25 states that man and woman are not aware of their nakedness and this paves the way for the awareness in episode III. In other words, the openness of episode II (*B*) creates the possibility of episode III (*B̄*) and of episode IV (*A*). A semiotic analysis makes clear that it is incorrect to view the so-called paradisiacal state of man in the garden of Eden in Gen 2 as a static or completed situation. The semantic analysis of the lines of meaning makes clear that this episode already contains the openness, even the need, for change.

The second aspect which appears from the semantic analysis of the relation between man and animal is the value of the iconic sign relation for the reader's process of giving meaning and so also for the semantic analysis. That the reader attributes meaning to a text by following the strategic generation of meaning of the text and by supplying and defining it and by construing a (first) network of meaning can be found in the introduction of this semantic analysis (6.1). In order to do this he must have a good command of the Hebrew linguistic code and be able to use and understand the normal discriminations or differentiations in the Hebrew culture. On the basis of this competence the reader is able to understand the more conventional or symbolic sign relations within the text of Gen 2-3. But moreover, on the basis of this very competence, the reader can also detect the differences in or variations on the linguistic and cultural

conventions, and assign meaning to the individual and new contents on the basis of the iconic qualities of the text.

In this analysis the value for the reader of phonetic, morphemic and syntactic icons has become clear. In the first place there is the phonetic iconic relation between *arummum* and *arum* in 2:25 and 3:1 which the reader can use in his interpretation. It is up to the reader whether or not to use this possibility, to draw up a hypothesis concerning the semantic value of this iconic quality. This is what Peirce calls abduction: the reader is able to attribute meaning on the basis of a certain quality or possibility in the text (Firstness). But the reader has to take the plunge himself, and draw up a risky hypothesis in which he considers similarity as a valuable element in the act of giving meaning. Once the reader has made this step, he will then have to check his abduction by means of inductive and deductive reasonings, by checking the possibility against reality (Secondness) and the rules or conventions (Thirdness). Then there is a morphemic icon, the suffix *-ah* in *zarah*, her seed or the seed of woman, in 3:15. This unusual expression, unusual against the background of the linguistic and cultural conventions, contains a quality (Firstness) which the reader can interpret as an iconic sign of the semantic contents indicating that there is a relation between woman and life, between the serpent and life, and between woman and the serpent. The naming of woman as *hawwa* in 3:20 enables the reader to check this abduction off against the text (Secondness) and the linguistic convention (Thirdness). Finally, there is a syntactic icon, the syntactic parallels between 2:25 and 3:7 and between 3:1 and 3:14. The reader may consider such a parallelism in the syntax as a reference to a parallelism in meaning. The reader can for example interpret the parallel verses 2:25 and 3:7 as a transition of /naked and knowing/ to /naked and knowing/, and of /seeing and knowing/ to /seeing and knowing (=being aware)/. Iconic signs do not only attract the reader's attention, they also point to a relation and represent a new contents. The reader is able to assign original meanings on the basis of these iconic sign relations in conjunction with symbolic sign relations. He can combine these new meanings with known contents and transform them into a first network of meaning.

## **6.5 The Analysis of the Relation between Man and Woman**

### **6.5.1 The General Basis**

The fourth culturally determined category which Gen 2–3 presents to the reader via classemes and kernel semes refers to the relation between man and woman. This category presupposes a historically, biologically, socially



and economically defined world of experience which is consequently indirectly present in the text.

The isotopy man-woman is borne by the recurring elements of meaning or *classemes* which form the framework within which the specific forms of the contents, the kernel *semes*, can be placed. The *classemic* basis of this isotopy in Gen 2-3 can only be made clear in relation to the concept *adam*.

In Gen 2-3 the word *adam* occurs 23 times, nineteen times it is provided with the definite article (*ha-adam*)<sup>63</sup> and three times with the preposition "to" (*le-adam*).<sup>64</sup> The consonant text proves that *adam* is not a proper name but a common noun: it denotes the genus man.<sup>65</sup> It is characteristic of Gen 2-3 that the common noun *adam* functions as an individual, so that the noun denoting the genus man (*adam*) denotes both the individual human being and the individual male human being. Moreover, the terms *iš* (male man) and *išša* (woman) occur. What the connection between the terms *adam*, *iš* and *išša* is and what the general framework is within which man and woman function in Gen 2-3, can be specified by means of an investigation of those *classemes* which constitute the correlation between *adam* - *adama* and *iš* - *išša*.

In episode I (2:4b-6) the term *adam* occurs to indicate the absence of man: man is not yet present. It is not until episode II (2:7-25) that the birth and the initial phase of the development of the human being to man and woman becomes visible. Episode II (2:7-17) shows man at first as an undivided creature. Made by God out of the dust of the earth (*min ha-adama*) and in the service of the earth, this undivided human being is entirely linked to the earth. It is said in 2:18 of this undivided human being that he is not only one, but also alone. The condition of being alone

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<sup>63</sup> The only instance of *adam* occurring without the definite article or preposition is in 2:5 and it is clear that man in general is referred to. So there is no difference between this *adam* in 2:5 and *ha-adam* in the rest of Gen 2-3.

<sup>64</sup> In Gen 2:21 and 3:17,20 the word *le-adam* occurs, from which can be concluded that the Masoretes have provided the preposition *le-* with a *šewa*. This vocalization shows that they probably considered *adam* to be a proper name (Adam). But from the general context of the consonant text of Gen 2-3, in which *ha-adam* the human being occurs nineteen times, and from the specific context of 3:17 and 3:21 it appears that reading *le-adam* as a proper name is not possible. On the basis of the consonant text and the textual context one cannot but conclude that *le-adam* should be read as *la-adam*.

<sup>65</sup> Grant (1977) has shown on the basis of linguistic and statistical data that *adam* occurs 562 times in the Hebrew Bible (it does not occur in the plural, nor in the status constructus, nor combined with a pronominal suffix) and that *adam* in the Hebrew Bible always refers to a collectivum and never to an individual. "...an ancient Hebrew reader, with his mind steeped in the common use of 'adam could not have understood the story as that of a particular individual. From this point (i.e. Gen 2:21) ha'adam is spoken as if he were an individual (male) man" (1977:5).

(*lebaddo* solitary, alone) is referred to as a lack: man is differentiated from the earth, but not yet differentiated in himself.<sup>66</sup> Verse 2:18–20 stress the lack and the desirability for change. In 2:21–22 the removal of the lack follows. Woman is created, made by God out of the rib of man (*min ha-adam*). Man celebrates the unity and the difference in 2:23: from being one and alone he has become differentiated and plural.<sup>67</sup> In his relation with woman, *išša*, the human being no longer refers to himself as *adam*, as a being differentiated from the *adama*, but as *iš*, as a being differentiated in man and woman. This is the crucial issue: the human being is a relational creature. As a human being he derives his identity from his relation with the earth, as a male human being he derives his identity from his relation with woman.<sup>68</sup>

In episode III (3:1–7) the specific relation *iš* – *išša* occupies a central position and this is proved by the absence of the words *adam* and *adama*. The human being does not appear as a single being, but as man and woman closely related. This dual being of man and woman is in this pericope characterized by a considerable togetherness or collectiveness, which appears from the fact that in all the verses of this episode the verbs and pronominal suffixes are in the plural, all in all twelve times in seven verses, and also from the construction *išah immah* (her husband with her) (3:6). Man and woman form together this dual human being in which unity is central and the distinctions of episode II seem to have disappeared. In episode II there was continuity and discontinuity between man and woman, but in episode III it is especially the continuity that is confirmed and the discontinuity more or less ignored. It should be added that in episode III, as in episode II, the relation between the (dual) human being and earth is absent: man and woman are not presented here in a direct relation with earth.

In episode IV (3:8–24) the dual subject of episode III has disappeared. The verb forms are no longer plural. In 3:10–13 man and woman each reason on their own and independently; the unity existing before is absent. The relation between man and woman which appeared in episode III, is shown in a different perspective: continuity turns out to have been replaced by discontinuity. The following verses 14–19 and 19–20 show that a commitment and solidarity continue to exist between man and woman in spite of this discontinuity. From /single and distinct/ in episode III, man and woman have become /two and committed/ in episode IV. Moreover,

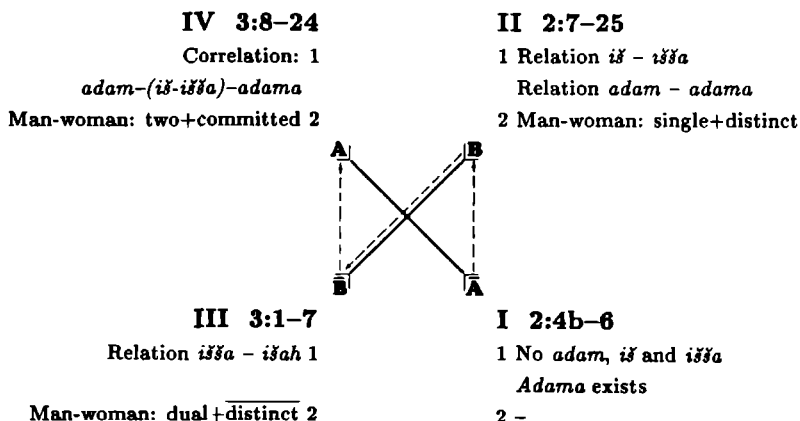
<sup>66</sup> He is differentiated as the genus man from other genera such as god, animal and plant, but not as yet differentiated in species.

<sup>67</sup> Man was not, as Trible 1973:35 claims, androgynous, both man and woman, but rather neither man nor woman.

<sup>68</sup> See Vogels 1978:25–35.

episode IV adds something new. Hitherto the relation between man and woman has been separate from the relation between man and earth, now a correlation appears between the two relations.

The isotopy "the relation between man and woman" in Gen 2-3 is based on classemes which constitute the general framework or general context. This classemic framework can be represented in the following semiotic square.



### 6.5.2 The Specific Contents

Whereas the general framework of the relation between man and woman in Gen 2-3 is constituted by the above mentioned classemes, the specific contents is defined by kernel semes which make two aspects of this relation concrete. With respect to the relation between man and woman Gen 2-3 continually presupposes the reader's experience of biological and cultural phenomena. It presupposes for example that the reader knows that it is woman, and not man, that bears children. In reading the text the reader is to laying iconic relations between text and reality.

(a) The first group of kernel semes bears on the *equality, dependence or auxiliary relation* which exists between man and woman.

(b) The second group of kernel semes concerns the *sexuality* and the *pro-creative capacity* in the relation between man and woman.

As these two groups of kernel semic definitions change in the course of Gen 2-3, they are best discussed per episode. No attention needs to be paid to episode I, because the human being, and consequently man and woman, is absent.

(a) In 2:18 God takes the initiative to make an *ezer kenegdo* for man, who is as yet undivided and single. The term *ezer* means help or helper, prerequisite for life, and implies neither superiority nor inferiority on the part of the person giving or receiving the aid.<sup>69</sup> It is therefore not possible to infer from the word *ezer* that the help created (animals, woman) is superior or inferior. The term *kenegdo* means matching him, suited to him, corresponding with him,<sup>70</sup> and this term does not express superiority or inferiority either, but rather correspondence and equality. Together the words *lebaddo* (alone, undivided, undifferentiated) in 2:18a and *ezer kenegdo* (a corresponding help) in 2:18b show that according to God man or the human being, who is as yet undivided, should be differentiated in equal or corresponding parts so that they will be partners.

The context of 2:18 makes it clear why such a differentiation is necessary and why man cannot live as a single being but needs the help of a partner. The help is related to the removal of man's loneliness or his solitariness (2:18a) and with the tilling of the earth (2:15). Apparently the animals cannot function as such a help (2:19-20) and that is why man's need for a suitable helpmate or partner increases. In 2:21-22 it is twice mentioned explicitly that God takes a rib from man. God "builds" (*bana*) this rib into woman. The term *tsela* (rib) indicates that this help in the person of woman is on the "same level". Like *ezer* and *kenegdo*, *tsela* expresses the equality or correspondence between the two parts of the human being: man and woman.

Then verse 2:23 follows. In this verse the human being, who by the division is differentiated into man and woman, celebrates not the distinction but the unity: "This one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh." He expresses this in language: he gives himself and the newly formed being the same name, using the masculine gender (*iš*) for himself and the feminine gender (*išša*) for the other. In other words, in 2:23 the text presents to the reader a linguistic convention in which *išša* means "woman" and *iš* "man". At the same time by means of the arrangement of *iš* and *išša* in this context the reader is offered the possibility to assign

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<sup>69</sup> Word analysis by Ska (1984), primarily based on texts of the Tora and the Psalms, reveals that *ezer* means help or helper needed in case of mortal danger, who liberates from the threat of death. Furthermore, it appears that in the Psalms God is often called *ezer*.

<sup>70</sup> While *neged* means countenance or front, *kenegdo* means literally as opposite to him, as his counterpart (ThWAT V:189, Cassuto 1961:127; Westermann 1974:309) and so "a helper like him, suited to him, worthy of him, corresponding to him" (Cassuto 1961:127), "die ihm entspricht" (Westermann 1974:309) and "corresponding to him" ThWAT V:189, BDB).

to *išša* a special meaning which is characteristic of this text. The resemblance between the words *iš* and *išša* which occur side by side in this text, function for the reader as a sememic icon: both the striking similarity in stem (*iš*) and the gender difference (*-a*) represent to the reader the semantic content of equality and difference in sex, of both unity and distinction. In 2:23 man celebrates woman as *ezer kenegdo* and in doing so he stresses *kenegdo*, equality and unity, and the fact that she is part of him, a partner. He hardly pays attention to woman as *ezer* and the purpose of this help.

An exceptional verse follows immediately after the celebration of the unity. It is exceptional because in 2:24 the narrator turns away from the characters to address the reader. He draws the reader's attention to the purpose of this help, to the meaning of this differentiation of the human being into man and woman: man and woman are companions or partners to become one flesh. According to 2:24 that is the purpose of the creation of *ezer kenegdo*. Woman saves man both from loneliness and the mortal danger or the threat of death, because she saves man from the threat of non-survival. A single man cannot survive, since man has to be differentiated into a male and a female part in order to survive. It is God who sees the need for differentiation, because what he has in mind is a life in perpetuity and a continual tilling of the earth. The narrator introduces this element in the text by abandoning the development of the plot and addressing the reader. But the characters man and woman themselves are not yet ready for this: as appears from 2:25, they are as yet only aware of their unity and not of their distinction. They are still *arum*, naked and unaware. In other words, their partnership is still based on similarities, but not on differences.

(b) The *physical dimension* in the relation between man and woman is discussed in several ways in episode II. Verse 2:23 says: "this (*zot*) one at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. This one (*zot*) will be called woman (*išša*), for from man (*iš*) is she (*zot*) taken." The poetic rhythm makes the reader aware of the importance of this verse. Gen 2:23 stresses the physical unity and the shared origin. Both are made of the same substance: bone (referring to the rib in 2:21) and flesh. The word *min* (out of), which occurs three times, draws the reader's attention to this shared origin and to the similarities. The word *zot* (this) on the other hand, which is mentioned on three occasions, at the beginning, in the middle and at the end of the verse, points out to the reader the individual and distinctive qualities: although woman is taken out of man, she is different from him.

In Gen 2:24 it is not the physical unity that occupies a central position as in 2:23, but the physical coupling or sexual contact, without any reference to the aspect of procreation. The narrator is ahead of the narrative events in this verse. This verse indicates the intention or purpose

of the differentiation between man and woman. On the basis of both their shared origin and their distinctiveness (2:23), man and woman will be able to become one flesh (*basar eḥad*). Lawton (1986:98) describes the imperfect *ya'azob* (he will leave) and the perfecta consecutiva *we-dabaq* (and he will cling) and *we-hayu* (and they will become) as expressing potency and intention which is to be translated by "should" or "are to".<sup>71</sup> However, although these verb forms may (among others) denote intention, there is no indication in the text to support this aspect. The text rather indicates a timeless, ever valid or proverbial contents: "Hence a man will leave his father and mother and will cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh." Although the intention of the distinction is expressed in 2:24 it is not yet realized. For it appears in 2:25 that man and woman are not aware of the difference between them.<sup>72</sup>

So far the physical unity in a narrow sense has come to the fore. Several authors, including Brueggemann (1970), Gilbert (1978), Sasson (1985) and Westermann (1974) focused on the general personal character of the relation between man and woman in 2:23–25. Brueggemann sees 2:23 mainly as a covenant formula: for the partners are joined for better and for worse to be responsible for the tilling and the maintenance of the earth. According to him, 2:24 is also written in the language of covenants and this appears particularly from *dabaq* to cling to, and refers to a mutual involvement, solidarity and loyalty. For Gilbert (1978) these verses express the strong connaturality of man and woman, which far from excluding a sexual relation actually includes it. It appears from these studies that in 2:23–24 man and woman are partners in the most general sense of the word. Their unity and their alliance has a strong physical dimension but should not be restricted to the physical only.

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<sup>71</sup> Accordingly, Lawton translates: "Therefore a man should / was to leave his father and mother and cling to his wife, and they should / were to become one flesh." Lawton's translation of the intention in a past tense is odd. In view of his interpretation a present tense would be more likely.

<sup>72</sup> Sasson (1985:420) has given his own interpretation to the term *yitbošāšu*, which is usually translated by "they felt no shame". He describes this verb as an imperfect indicating a continuing situation and as a hitpolel which indicates both a reciprocal and a factitive action. So he arrives at the following translation: "Yet, they did not embarrass each other". And he continues: "...this translation implies the pair did not have the potential to find blemishes with each other because they did not perceive anatomical, sexual or role distinctions within the species". Sasson's interpretation might be true, but need not to be translated by embarrassing, because feeling shame has a reciprocal and factitive aspect as well. However, Sasson's interpretation can be supported in his opposition to Wambacq (1970) who declared that nakedness in the Hebrew Bible had nothing to do with sexuality but only with humility, human weakness and misery. Sasson criticizes Wambacq for having consulted the prophetic texts only and for not doing any justice to this text in Genesis.

In summary it can be said that in episode II the general classemic basis of the relation between man and woman, which is described as /one and distinct/ and /independent of the relation between man and earth/, is given a concrete contents by means of kernel semes. The differentiation of the human being into man and woman leads to a partnership based on both similarities and shared origin (2:21–23). The intention or aim of the partnership is to make man and woman become one flesh (2:24). But this intention is not yet realized since they are not aware of their differences (2:25). Both the narrator's mention of this intention in 2:24 and the mention of the lack of knowledge in 2:25 show that this episode creates a semantic openness for changes. So there is not a static situation in the garden of Eden, but a dynamic one which demands development. It is remarkable that the narrator himself presents to the reader this openness for future change.

=Episode III: 3:1–7=

(a) This is the only episode in Gen 2–3 in which the term *ha-adam*, man or the human being, does not occur; only the terms *ha-išša*, woman (3:1,2,4,6) and *išah*, her husband (3:6) occur. Woman and man invariably occur together, as the plural verb forms already indicate.<sup>73</sup> Although woman in 3:6a acts as a single and autonomous subject, the verse is immediately followed by 3:6b, in which the words *išah immah*, her husband with her, again stress togetherness. The expression *išah immah* is unique in Genesis, because the other verses invariably read *ha-adam we-išto*, the human being/man and his wife. Its effect is to draw the reader's attention to this verse: man is called *išah*, her husband, a word which shows great similarity with *išša* woman.<sup>74</sup> This similarity in expression-forms functions for the reader as a phonetic icon representing the semantic meaning of a very considerable unity. Based on this iconic quality the reader can assign the meaning of unity and near-equality to the relation between woman and her husband. There can hardly be a clearer iconic representation of the unity between man and woman.

There is a slight change in 3:7. The plural verb forms remain, the actions continue to be mutual and undifferentiated, but the awareness of the differences is growing. There is a pronounced parallelism between 2:25 and 3:7. In 2:25 man and woman were not aware of their nakedness and

<sup>73</sup> Gen 3:1 you shall not eat, 3:2 we may eat; 3:3 you shall not eat, you shall not touch, lest you die; 3:4 you are going to die; 3:5 you will eat, your eyes will be opened, you will be; 3:7 the eyes of both of them were opened, they became aware, they sewed together, they made themselves.

<sup>74</sup> In Hebrew characters this is rendered as אִשָּׁה, אִשָּׁה.

there was no embarrassment. In 3:7 they become aware of their mutual differences and they are embarrassed by each other and so they seek to cover themselves. They do not become aware of the differences independently and individually, but through each other.

(b) In the previous episode the emphasis was completely on the *physical* unity which was based on the unity of origin, and which was represented by the linguistic signs "to take from" (*laqaḥ min* three times in 2:21–23) and "from" (*min* five times in 2:21–23). Here in episode III (3:1–7) there is no question any longer of that shared origin (*from*). These verses do not refer to the past, but to the present only. It is not the original physical unity or the physical coupling or sexual contact in the future that are referred to but only the shared actions of the present. Woman and man act in a personal alliance as partners on the basis of togetherness and they do so even until the moment they become aware of the differences between them. It is only after this, in episode IV, that a breach occurs between man and woman.

In short, in episode III the relation between man and woman, of which the general basis is determined by the classemes /dual/ and /distinct/, is made concrete and iconically presented by various kernel semes, which show that this episode deals with *išša* (woman) and *išah* (her husband) and their shared actions. Man and woman act as partners on the basis of equality, in a personal relation, and it is on the basis of this that they together become aware together of the differences between them.

=Episode IV: 3:8–24=

(a) In contrast with episode III all togetherness has disappeared at the beginning of episode IV. Verses 3:8–12 prepare for a climax of estrangement in 3:12. At first there are still a few plural verb forms (3:8), but from 3:9 they are replaced by singular verb forms. Then man and woman act independently of each other (3:10ff) and finally man explicitly distances himself from woman (3:12).<sup>75</sup> Before, the text said "her husband" and "his wife", now it says in 3:12 "the woman you gave me", "she". In speaking to God man denies his responsibility and blames woman, which testifies to a certain distance from the woman. The continuity of episode III has been replaced by discontinuity in these verses (3:10–13), but in 3:16–24 the situation changes. Once again a link or relation is established between man and woman, which is given a new form on the basis of the altered situation. In order to be able to understand the ultimate relation between man and woman, a careful analysis of verses 16–24 is necessary.

In Gen 3:16–24 two lines occur which are closely connected. The first

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<sup>75</sup> See also Hauser 1982:30.



one concerns the relation between man and earth, the second the relation between man and woman. The relation between man and earth in 3:16–24 is more prominent than would at first appear. In 3:16 God addresses *ha-išša*, woman, and in 3:17 he addresses *ha-adam*. Most readers and exegetes assume as a matter of course that 3:17–19 relates to man.<sup>76</sup> Yet the contents of 3:17b–19 make clear that this cannot be taken for granted. If these verses were to refer only to man it would imply that the tilling of the earth and the eating of the fruit of the earth, as well as returning to earth, or dying, do not apply to woman. That woman must also till the earth is already implicitly stated in the text: when man was still undivided and single (2:15) he was given the duty to till the earth in the garden.<sup>77</sup> When the return to earth is mentioned in 3:19, there is an explicit reference to 2:7.<sup>78</sup> Verse 2:7 discussed the beginning of man, his origin in the earth, while verse 3:19 discusses the beginning and end of man, his origin in and return to earth. It is clear that not only man dies, but woman also. Therefore the contents of God's words in 3:17b–19 also bear on woman and so on man in general and indicate that what is meant here is the human being in relation to the earth.

This is also the case in 3:22–24. In 3:22 God says that *ha-adam* is like unto him where the knowledge of good and bad is concerned. This verse refers to 3:5–7, in which woman and man acquire knowledge of good and bad. Therefore God's observation in 3:22 concerning *ha-adam*'s likeness to God refers to both man and woman. In 3:23–24 God expels *ha-adam* from the garden to till the earth outside the garden. No one assumes that woman remains behind. It is obvious that these verses concern both man and woman and that here *ha-adam* means the human being.<sup>79</sup> To be expelled from the garden in order to till the earth (3:23–24), to come from the earth and to return to it (3:19,23) and in the meantime to till the earth (3:17b,19,23), all these verses show that the relation between human being (man and woman) and earth is very prominent in episode IV.

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<sup>76</sup> Vogels (1978:32) is an exception.

<sup>77</sup> The readers in Palestine which the author of Gen 2–3 had in mind would naturally accept this, because both men and women farmed the land in Palestine in that period. This shows that Gen 2–3 is indirectly determined by that reality.

<sup>78</sup> Gen 2:7a: "God created man from the dust of the earth (*apar min ha-adama*)."  
Gen 3:19: "...until you return to the earth (*ha-adama*) from which you are taken. For dust (*apar*) you are, and to dust (*apar*) you will return."

<sup>79</sup> Bal (1985:25,29) contradicts herself in this connection. On p.25 she says that in Gen 2–3 *ha-adam* is a sexually undifferentiated being and so denotes man in the sense of human being. One of her arguments is that otherwise Gen 3:22–23 would refer to the male only. On the other hand she says that from 2:23 onwards *ha-adam* only denotes male man: "Already (2:23) the word *adam* has definitely lost its previous meaning, as subsequent readings show." (1985:29)

The other line of the relation between man and woman has been woven into this. In 3:16 God addresses woman: "I will greatly multiply the suffering of your pregnancy.<sup>80</sup> With pain you will bear children; for your man will be your desire and he will rule over you." More will follow about the context within which this text should be read. This verse merely deals with woman and her relation to man. Verse 3:20 refers to this when man gives woman a new name: mother of all living beings. Therefore, verses 3:16 and 3:20 express a new function of woman, a function which on the one hand ties and commits her to man and on the other hand distinguishes her from man.

In 3:17a God addresses *ha-adam*. It has already been stated that the contents of this address (3:17b-19) refers to man (in the sense of human being, man and woman) and to the relation between man and earth. In 3:17a however *ha-adam* is combined with *isto* (his wife) and consequently *ha-adam* must mean male man. God blames man for having listened to his wife and not to God, for having eaten of the tree whose fruit God had forbidden and, by extension, for concentrating only on woman and not on God, on eating and not on tilling the earth. God objects to separating the relation between man and woman from the relation between the human being and earth and that between the human being and God. Against this he places in the verses 3:17b-19 and 22-24 the fact that the relation between man and woman is set within the framework of both the relation between the human being and earth and the relation between the human being and God. God makes it clear that the relation between the human being and earth should take up a central position and that the relation between man and woman is subject to this.

In other words, in reaction to the actions of man and woman in episode III God addresses woman and man and places the relations in a hierarchical order: the relation between man and woman and woman's own particular function (3:16), the relation between the human being and earth and his own particular task in this (3:17b-19) and the relation between God and the human being including his resemblance to God and his own particular nature (3:22-24). It is essential that these relations do not exist separately, but continually interchange and correlate.

The reader of Gen 2-3 can only understand the correlation or connection of the relations between the terms human being, man, woman and earth if he makes use of the iconic qualities of the text. In that case the similarities between the phrases in the text serve for the process of giving

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<sup>80</sup> Literally 3:16a says: "I will multiply your suffering and your pregnancy". This hendiadys may be assumed as a unity (see Westermann 1974). Another acceptable possibility would be to interpret the *waw* as an *waw* explicativum and to translate "I will greatly multiply your suffering, especially of your childbearing" (see Cassuto 1961).

meaning. This process executed by the reader takes place on the basis of a phonetic iconic relation which connects *adam* with *adama* and *iš* with *išša*, a morphemic iconic relation which connects *adam* with *išša*, and a sememic iconic relation which connects the word pair *adam* – *adama* with the word pair *iš* – *išša*.

The first iconic similarity, a phonetic one, alerts the reader to the relations which are established in Gen 2–3 between *adam* – *adama* and *iš* – *išša*. In itself *iš* does not have the same etymological origin as *išša*, while *adam* does have the same etymological origin as *adama*. This, however, is not relevant for the functioning of these linguistic signs in this context. The phonetic resemblance between *adam* – *adama* and between *iš* – *išša* would seem to suggest to the reader that these terms in the text are also semantically related.

The second iconic resemblance, a morphemic one, alerts the reader to the relation which Gen 2–3 establishes between *adama* and *išša*. Even though in the Hebrew linguistic code *adama* is not the grammatical feminine form of *adam*, unlike *išša*, which is the grammatical feminine form of *iš*, the morphemic similarity between the feminine form *adama* and the feminine form *išša* represent an analogy in meaning. Gen 3:16a and 3:20 describe the *išša* as she who brings forth children, as the mother of all living beings: every *iš* is brought forth by her. This is confirmed by Gen 4:1, in which is described how the first woman, Chawwa, bears her first son; she calls him Cain, “because”, she says, “I have begotten an *iš* together with YHWH.” To the present day it has not been sufficiently explained why the term *iš* occurs in this verse, whereas from the point of view of Gen 2–3 it can be explained: every *iš* is brought forth by an *išša*. At the same time the *adama* is called the source of life in Gen 2–3 (2:7,19,23; 3:19,24): she brings forth the *adam*, the plants, trees and animals. The emphasis is on the *adam* here (2:7; 3:19,24): every *adam* is brought forth by the *adama*. The analogy is obvious: the morpheme or the female suffix *-a* in *adama* and *išša* shows in which sense both terms are similar, namely in the sense of bringing forth life; it expresses the female, in this case the life-giving function. In other words: the iconic quality *-a* in *adama* and *išša* is the (morphemic) expression form which enable the reader to relate it to a new content form or meaning, different from the one laid down in the linguistic code: that of “giving life”. In this connection another, closely related, analogy presents itself. As the *adama* brings forth an *adam* together with YHWH (2:7), the *išša* brings forth an *iš* together with YHWH (4:1).

The third iconic similarity, a sememic one, draws the reader's attention to the connection in Gen 2–3 between the word pair *adam* — *adama* and *iš* – *išša*. Neither the linguistic convention and the logical relation based on it, nor etymology clarify the connection between these four terms in the text. Only an analysis on the basis of analogy offers an explanation.

Gen 3:16b describes *išša* as someone who yearns for *iš*, while *iš* will rule over *išša*. Gen 3:17–18 and 23 describe the *adama* as something which because of the tilling by the *adam* can bring forth plants. As the *adama* depends on the husbandry of the *adam*, so the *išša* depends on the management of the *iš*. Gen 3:16b, a controversial verse, especially in feminist exegesis, can only be understood in its context.<sup>81</sup> There is not only a relation between *adama* and *išša*, in which the grammatical feminine form *-a* is the iconic sign of the feminine, life-giving function, but also a relation between *adam* and *iš*, in which the grammatical male form is the iconic sign of the masculine managing function. The first analogy appears from a morphemic icon (*-a*), the second analogy appears from a sememic icon, that is to say from the relation between the semes *adam*, *adama*, *iš* and *išša*. In Gen 2–3 the feminine forms represent the life-giving function and the masculine the managing function, while the two functions are closely related; the one is not possible without the other. This complex sememic connection can be represented in the following diagram.

$$\frac{ADAM : ADAMA}{IŠ : IŠŠA} = \text{management : giving life}$$

The reader can only discover this complex of relations when he takes the phonetic, morphemic and sememic iconic relations between *adam*, *adama*, *iš* and *išša* as the starting-point of his semiosis or process of giving meaning and if he construes the continuities and discontinuities between these terms into one network of meaning. In this network man and woman, human being and earth are on the one hand distinct from each other because of their tasks and functions (discontinuity) and on the other hand inseparably tied and committed to each other (continuity). In this network man as a human being is dependent on the earth, for it is his beginning and end and in the time between beginning and end it is his food supply; as a (male) man he is dependent on woman for she is the one who bears new life. In this network woman as a human being is dependent on the earth because it is also her beginning and end and food source; as a woman she is dependent on man's management, care and protection. And in this network the earth

<sup>81</sup> A number of studies have appeared recently (Busenitz 1986 and Meyers 1983) in which there is an attempt to interpret 3:16b in such a way that there cannot be said to be any domination of woman by man. But the word *mašal*, to rule over, argues against this interpretation. It appears from the iconic sign relations to what extent the managing function of man with respect to woman corresponds to that of the human being with respect to the earth.

is dependent on the human being (man and woman) and its tilling of the earth in order to be able to produce vegetation. In this way it becomes clear that the dependence of woman with respect to man can therefore not be separated from man's dependence with respect to woman, nor can it be separated from the relation of mutual dependence between the human being and the earth. Moreover it should be added that for Gen 2-3 the relation between the human being and the earth takes priority, as it forms the framework of the relation between man and woman.<sup>82</sup>

Life in the singular, with which the text began, earth in the singular (2:4b-6) and a human being in the singular who is only linked to the earth in the garden (2:7-3:7), has gradually developed into plural life in episode IV: life consisting of mutually distinct but essentially interdependent components, man and woman, human being and earth.

The contents of the ultimate relation between man and woman is expressed in 3:16 and 3:20. In these verses the content of *ezer* in episode II, which was still undefined, is now completed. The woman will be man's *ezer*, because she makes the continuation of life possible. Man and woman are no longer partners on the basis of similarities as was the case in episode II, nor partners on the basis of togetherness as in episode III, but they are partners on the basis of similarities and differences (3:17-19). This continuity and discontinuity form the basis for the relation between man and woman in episode IV.

(b) There is hardly a discussion of the *physical* unity in episode IV in the sense of a shared origin and substance as it figured in episode II. Awareness of differences, knowledge, pregnancy and childbearing all presuppose two distinct bodies, striving for physical union. It is once more possible to observe an analogy between *adam* and *iš*, *adama* and *išša*. In episode II it was frequently stated that man was taken out of earth and woman out of man, now in episode IV the statement is repeated (3:19,23) and completed with the statement that man returns to earth (on three occasions in 3:19 and 23) and that woman desires physical union with man in order to become one flesh again. All emphasis is on the circular movement of existence: apart from *min* (out of) *el* also occurs, both with reference to woman in 3:16b as to the human being in 3:19 and 23. The union in one body, sexual intercourse, makes new life possible (3:16,20). The union with earth signifies death. In this way beginning and end of life, sexuality and death are interrelated.

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<sup>82</sup> See also Brueggemann (1970): "The text places the man-woman in the context of the larger issue of man's relation to earth. In establishing priorities, there is no doubt that the intimate personal relation is subordinated to and understood with reference to man's first vocation, the care of and covenant with the rest of creation." (1970:532)

Resuming, in episode IV the relation between man and woman can be summarized as a partnership based on similarities and differences. In this partnership woman is responsible for new life and so for the survival of the human being, while man is responsible for management, care and protection. Although both have different functions and duties, they are nevertheless interdependent. The relation between man and woman is correlated with the relation between the human being and earth. In the latter relation the earth is responsible for new life and the production of vegetation, while the human being is responsible for its management, care and protection. Both have different duties, but again they are interdependent. Even though both relations are geared towards the future in their emphasis on survival, the foundation has nevertheless been laid in the past: the origin of the human being in earth and man's and woman's origins in the undivided human being. Origin and future, return to the earth and physical union, death and sexual intercourse are therefore related to each other and bound up inextricably.

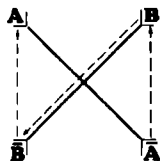
This ultimate correlation between man and woman on the one hand and between the human being and the earth on the other is preceded by a certain development. In episode (I), II and III this correlation does not yet exist. In episode II both relations are still separate and, as far as the relation between man and woman is concerned, the emphasis is on a partnership on the basis of similarities, on the basis of the shared origin. In episode III all attention is directed to the relation *išša* - *išah* (woman and her husband) and the emphasis is on a partnership on the basis of equality and togetherness, and on acting in the present. It is only in episode IV that the correlation between man-woman and man-earth is established. The differences between man and woman are incorporated in a partnership based on similarities and differences and in actions that are geared towards the future.

In the analysis of the other isotopies the attention has already been drawn to the fact that Gen 2-3 contains the germ for the further semantic development of the story right from the start. This appears once again from the isotopy of the relation between man and woman. In episode II the narrator explicitly points forward to a change in the future (2:24). In episode III and IV this change is realized. The contents of these episodes, insofar as they refer to the relation between man and woman, and the developments of the one into the other can be represented in the following semiotic square.

#### IV 3:8-24

Partnership based on  
similarities and differences;  
Two and committed 1  
Mutual dependence 2

Oriented towards the future 3  
Knowledge and 4  
procreative capacity



#### III 3:1-7

Partnership based on  
equality;  
Dual and distinct 1  
Togetherness 2

Oriented towards the present 3  
Knowledge and 4  
procreative capacity

#### II 2:7-25

Partnership based  
on similarities;  
1 Single and distinct  
2 Woman as  
corresponding help of man  
3 Oriented towards the past  
4 Knowledge and  
procreative capacity

#### I 2:4b-6

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### 6.5.3 Final remarks

The interaction between text and reader has become clear in the discussion of this isotopy. On the one hand the text offers elements of meaning which are fixed or determined, that is conventional or symbolical, and which form imperative textual strategies which the reader has to follow in his *semiosis* or process of giving meaning. Apart from this, the text also contains individual qualities and structures which form a reservoir of possible meanings which the reader can use in the process of meaning generation with respect to the text. In the latter case we are dealing with possibilities, with non-imperative strategies which may or may not be used. On the other hand it is up to the reader to assign meaning to the text, to translate the imperative and less imperative strategies into networks of meaning. It is the reader who has to understand the linguistic conventions and recognize certain iconic qualities as a basis for possible meanings. It is the reader who integrates the determinacies and indeterminacies of the text, who supplies them and gives meaning to them.

By using the linguistic code in Gen 2–3 new combinations are formed, new relations are found between words which together form a new and unique whole. The reader can understand these new contents by placing them against the background of the familiar, the known or the regular. The text draws the reader's attention to new relations of meaning by offering variations on familiar structures. The word variation in itself indicates that there is a combination of known and unknown elements. And the unknown may be understood by its own expressive power, its iconic quality. An icon or likeness presents the new element in a moment of revelation. Once the reader has seen the analogy, image or icon, he cannot but incorporate it in his interpretation of the text. In this way the reader can understand the individual, characteristic and new contents of the relation between man and woman in episode III, when he observes the expressive force of the phonetic similarity between *išša* and *išah* and absorbs it when he gives meaning to the text. It then becomes clear that there is not just a general togetherness in this episode, as expressed in the conventional grammatical plural forms or symbolic sign relations, but rather a unity, a near abolition of the condition of being two. Iconic relations therefore presuppose symbolical relations, take them as their basis but also enlarge them: they add a sort of surplus value.

Usually the reader is not aware of the fact that he uses the iconic qualities of the text in the process of giving meaning. On the other hand the analyst has to be aware of the fact that he uses the possibilities or qualities of the text. Of course not every analysis will always have to devote the same amount of time and attention to this. However, in the semantic analysis offered here it is necessary to be as explicit as possible to clarify the role of the reader in the interaction between the text and the reader and the function of the iconic signs in this interaction. As a result of the interaction between the imperative and non-imperative or optional strategies of the text on the one hand and the reader on the other, the reader links isotopies with the text and then places them over the text as a network of meaning. It should be clear that the reader can never exhaust the reservoir of meanings of the text and that the reader interacting with the text can continually attribute new meanings.

## **6.6 The Analysis of the Relation between Life and Death**

### **6.6.1 The General Basis**

A fifth general, culturally determined, category which the text presents to the reader in the *classemes* refers to the relation between life and death.

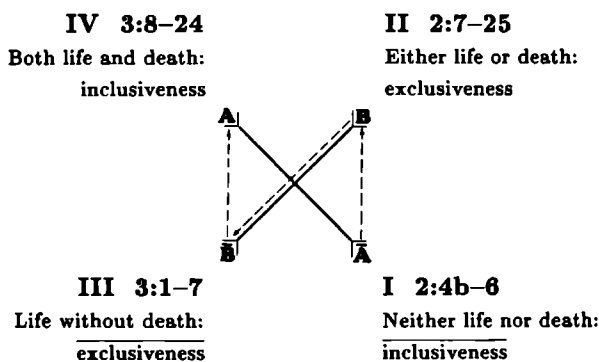


This category presupposes a world of experience which is determined in its biological-physiological, religious, social and mythological aspects, and which is indirectly present in the text as a result.

In Gen 2-3 God, man, animal and plant belong to the living, but it is only with reference to man that life and death are discussed. Consequently the attention in this section will focus exclusively on the relation between life and death with reference to man.

In the beginning of the text (2:4b-6) life does not exist. Neither does death; there is neither life nor death. In the subsequent episode (2:7-24) man is created as a living being (2:7) and in 2:17 the possibility of death is presented as well as life. The prohibition mentioned in 2:17 makes it clear that life and death are mutually exclusive: there is either life or death. As there is no violation of the prohibition in this episode, man is related to life only and not to death. In the next episode (3:1-7) woman and her husband violate the prohibition and so deny the possibility of death. They ignore death and opt for a life without death. But the result is that in the final episode (3:8-24) man is related to both life and death. Death and life are no longer mutually exclusive as in episode II, but occur together from episode IV onwards. In other words, the exclusive relation of episode II is substituted by an inclusive relation in episode IV; life and death, which were previously separate, are now related to each other.

The classemic basis of the relation between life and death in Gen 2-3 can therefore be represented in the following semiotic square:



### 6.6.2 The Specific Contents

Whereas the general contents of the relation between life and death in Gen 2-3 is defined by the above-mentioned *classemes*, its specific contents is constituted by kernel *semes* which relate to (a) *the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad; living and knowing* and (b) *procreation and sexuality; eternal life and death*. These kernel *semes* or specific values change in the course of Gen 2-3 and will therefore be discussed with reference to the four textual episodes of Gen 2-3. Episode I will not be discussed, as life and death do not occur there.

#### Excursus: the tree of knowledge and the tree of life

There are many exegetic studies dealing with the trees in Gen 2-3. The first thing that strikes the reader is that the trees are always dealt with separately and are not related to each other while the two trees occur side by side in 2:9 and in 3:22 seem to be related from the point of view of content.<sup>83</sup> A second striking element is that the attention is almost exclusively directed to the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, whereas the tree of life is paid hardly any attention. Of these studies of the two trees, three more or less representative studies will be dealt with in chronological order, namely Vriezen 1937, Westermann 1974 and Landy 1983.

1. Vriezen (1937:140-148) begins by observing that the tree of knowledge has a central position in the story, but hastens to add that the tree of life is not unimportant. The tree of life is in the centre of the garden and eating its fruit gives eternal life and consequently it forms an important background to the story. However, apart from this one sentence, Vriezen does not pay any attention to the tree of life or to the relation between the tree of life and the tree of knowledge. He only deals extensively with *ets hadda'at tob wa-ra*, which he translates by "de boom van goed en kwaad kennen", as an *infinitivus constructus* with two (grammatical) objects. Contrary to the tree of life this tree does not occur anywhere else in the Old Testament or in the ancient Semitic world and is therefore characteristic of this text. The knowledge of good and evil does occur elsewhere, for example in Deut 1:19 and 2 Sam 14:17,20. On the basis of the parallel to 2 Sam 14:17,20 Vriezen draws the conclusion that the knowledge of good and evil consists in possessing a higher cognitive function which only belongs to a divine being.<sup>84</sup> The tree of the knowledge of good and evil is a holy tree, a tree which belongs

<sup>83</sup> Except for Stoebe 1953 and Landy 1983.

<sup>84</sup> Vriezen's interpretation is based on 2 Sam 14:17,20, which says that a woman appeals to king David. Verse 17: "for your majesty is like the angel of God and can hear what is good and bad." Verse 20: "Your majesty is wise as the angel of God and knows all that goes on in the land." By homologating verse 17 (hearing good and bad) and verse 20 (knowing all that goes on in the land) Vriezen arrives at the conclusion that it is a characteristic of God to know good and bad. Both the fact that Vriezen bases his interpretation on only one pericope, which stands in a completely different context

to YHWH and which denotes the specific characteristic of YHWH's being, viz. the absolute, "numinose" knowledge (146-147). That is why Vriezen calls this tree a magic tree. Gen 2-3 does not confirm such magic, but opposes this attitude by presenting the tree of divine knowledge as the forbidden tree. According to Vriezen the main purpose of Gen 2-3 is to oppose magical thinking.

2. Westermann (1974:328-337) distinguishes two stories in Gen 2-3, one dealing with the tree of life and the other with the tree of knowledge.<sup>85</sup> Both stories have been combined into one story by the Yahwist. In the plot of the story of Gen 2-3 only the tree in the centre of the garden, the forbidden tree or the tree of knowledge, is considered. At the beginning and the end the Yahwist added the tree of life which is so familiar to the reader. Only on those occasions when the tree in the centre, or the forbidden tree, occurs next to the tree of life (2:9,17) does it receive the name of tree of the knowledge of good and evil, a name derived from 3:5b. Gen 3:6 makes it clear that for woman the desirability of the tree is rooted in *haskul* (to understand): she wants to gain insight and this insight corresponds to the knowledge of good and evil. This knowledge is functional, it makes clear what is good or beneficial for man and what is bad or detrimental. Westermann therefore thinks it is better to speak of the knowledge of good and bad, and not of good and evil, as evil has a very strong moral or ethical connotation. The issue here is knowledge in general, an all-encompassing knowledge and this "all" is expressed in the two poles "good and bad". This functional "auf das zu bewältigende Dasein bezogenes Erkennen" (329) is in its ultimate possibility a godlike knowledge: "es geht um ein göttliche, eine auf das höchste gesteigerte Befähigung zur Bewältigung des Daseins" (337). So Westermann agrees with Pedersen (*Wisdom and Immortality*, 1955) who believes that Gen 2-3 is about a conflict between God and man, because man pursues life and knowledge and God wants to prevent him acquiring it.<sup>86</sup>

3. Landy (1983:210-219) is the only one to discuss the meaning of the relation between the two trees.<sup>87</sup> The tree of life is the tree of immortality (3:22), of eternal

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from Gen 2-3, and the fact that there are two other texts, 2 Sam 19:36 and Deut 1:39, in which knowing good and bad occur independently of God, make his interpretation unconvincing.

<sup>85</sup> In this sense Westermann follows the literary historical tradition which attempts to explain the meaning of a biblical text by splitting it up into earlier and later parts. The (allegedly) oldest part is considered to be of prime importance. The consequence of this for Gen 2-3 is that in literary historical research one of the two trees, usually the tree of life, is removed from 2:9 as having originated from a secondary tradition.

<sup>86</sup> Apart from a literary historical explanation of the fact that in 2:9 the tree of life and the tree of good and bad occur side by side, Westermann does not attach any value or meaning to the two trees together and their joint functioning in Gen 2-3. This is all the more remarkable because he himself claims that the Yahwist deliberately combined the two stories into one. This should have resulted in a discussion of the relation between the two trees.

<sup>87</sup> Stoebe (1953) did say that both trees should be considered together, but in his discussion of their contents, he himself deals first and foremost with the meaning of

vitality, which indicates the very essence of the garden. That is why the tree stands in the centre of the garden. The contents of the tree of knowledge depends on that of the tree of life: "The Tree of Knowledge is functionally a Tree of Death ... stylistically complementing the Tree of Life."<sup>88</sup> (212). Landy presents his argument on the basis of this premise. In his opinion the knowledge of good and evil (these are inclusive terms) is an awareness of the universe divided as it is into good and evil; these two extremes determine existence. Knowing death is an essential part of the knowledge of evil; this knowledge is the absolute form of knowing: "death is the ultimate knowledge" (212).<sup>89</sup> Moreover in 2:16-17 the tree of knowledge is related to death<sup>90</sup> and so the tree of knowledge is the tree of death which stands in the centre of the garden. The relation between the two trees is clear then: "At the heart of the primeval garden we find twin trees, that correspond to Eros and Thanatos in man." (212) Landy links the tree of life with Eros, with immortality and immutability. He describes the psychological basis of this tree as the fear of death and of life as a creative and destructive process. He links the tree of knowledge with Thanatos, experience and change and he considers the desire for truth to be the basis of this tree. Following from this he describes God as the one who combines immortality and knowledge, transcendence and immanence, no change and change.<sup>91</sup> On pages 218-219 Landy himself mentions four reasons against his own interpretation of the tree of knowledge as the tree of death. (1) Elsewhere in the Hebrew Bible, especially in the Song of Songs, which has numerous inter-textual relations with Gen 2-3, knowledge denotes life and not death. (2) In Gen 3:1-6 both

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"good and evil" in the Hebrew Bible and relates this only in one sentence (p 201) to the tree of knowledge and the tree of life.

<sup>88</sup> In this Landy bases himself on Tsevat, whose evidence he summarizes in note 42. Tsevat offers three arguments for his belief that the tree of knowledge is the tree of death. The first argument is based on an Ugaritic text which refers to a tree of death and is supposed to be parallel to Gen 2-3. In his opinion this seems even more probable because from a stylistic point of view the tree of death in Gen 2:9 forms a good counterpart to the tree of life. The difficulty for Tsevat lies in the fact that 2:9 does not mention the tree of death. Tsevat has a narrative explanation for this and he formulates his second argument accordingly. The narrator does not use the expression "the tree of death" because it does not occur anywhere else. (Tsevat's argument is puzzling, because the expression "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" does not occur elsewhere either.) A third, also narrative argument used by Tsevat is that the narrator does not mention the tree of death, because it is illogical from a narrative point of view to have man eat of the tree of death. None of the arguments offered by Tsevat seem to be very conclusive.

<sup>89</sup> If good and evil are inclusive terms Landy cannot restrict himself to evil and to death.

<sup>90</sup> But does this mean that the tree itself is a tree of death?

<sup>91</sup> This gives rise to a number of questions. How can Landy connect the tree of knowledge with Thanatos and not with Eros, while the tree of knowledge gives the awareness of nakedness and, indirectly, procreative power? How can the characteristic "the opening of the eyes to life" be labelled under Thanatos? In short, is Landy not restricting the tree of knowledge too much to death?

woman and the serpent are mistaken, for they address themselves to the tree of death instead of the tree of life. This is inexplicable, the more so as the serpent is called shrewd. (3) God's carefree attitude after the transgression is remarkable. Not only man but also God seem to have forgotten the tree of life. "In the tale as it stands, it is a last incalculable irony." (219)<sup>92</sup> (4) In the verse immediately following Gen 2-3, viz. 4:1, it says that man had carnal knowledge of his wife Eva. So here knowledge appears to function in the service of giving life, of Eros and not of Thanatos. Landy observes a reversal in the meaning of knowledge here: "from being the agent of death it becomes the instrument of life." (219) It seems to me that in spite of the inspiring manner in which Landy described the link between the two trees in the garden, one cannot but conclude, on the basis of the four arguments mentioned above, that Landy's hypothesis that the tree of knowledge signifies the tree of death is untenable. The relation between the two trees is not one of life and death and will therefore have to be re-examined.

## =Episode II: 2:7-25=

### (a) *The tree of life and the tree of knowledge; living and knowing.*

In 2:9a it is said that God makes all trees shoot up from the earth and that they are desirable to see and good to eat of. The focus is on the sensual and aesthetic aspect. Two of the trees are described in more detail in 2:9b: the tree of life (*ets ha-hayyim*) and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad (*ets hadda'at tob wa-ra*). Only the qualification "life" is used for the first tree, the subsequent interpretation of "eternal life" (3:22) is not mentioned in this episode. This tree is the tree of sheer, unqualified life without qualifications. As Landy aptly puts it (1983:210), the tree indicates the essence of the garden: life, and that is why it stands in the centre of the garden.

The second tree, *ets hadda'at tob wa-ra*<sup>93</sup> might be translated as the tree of the knowledge of good and bad. The objects of the knowledge, *tob wa-ra*, are common and frequent terms without any individual specific connotation, neither in an ethical nor in any other sense. That is why they are best translated by "good and bad" and not by "good and evil", which has too strong an ethical connotation.<sup>94</sup> Good and bad are terms

<sup>92</sup> The concept irony disguises the contradiction between Landy's hypothesis and the text.

<sup>93</sup> *ets hadda'at tob wa-ra* is a status constructus combination. In the relation with *ets*, *hadda'at* functions as a noun. In the relation with *tob wa-ra*, *hadda'at* functions as a verb form (infinitive) of *yada* (knowing). That is to say, *hadda'at* has both a nominal and a verbal aspect.

<sup>94</sup> Several exegetes such as Stoebe (1953), Cassuto (1961), Westermann (1974) and Humphreys (1985) imply that *tob wa-ra* has no ethical connotation and often translate *tob wa-ra* on its own by "good and bad". However, in connection with the tree of

which indicate the two poles of a whole, and can therefore be compared to "from top to toe"; these terms are complementary and constitute a whole.<sup>95</sup> Several authors<sup>96</sup> have pointed out that good and bad should not be interpreted in a strictly theoretical or intellectual sense but rather in a practical sense: good is that which is useful or beneficial and bad is that which is harmful or detrimental. The same holds for *da'at*. The verb *yada* does not refer to an intellectual or theoretical knowing either, but to a practical and existential knowing, a knowing based on experience. Perception and experience lead to knowing, discriminating and distinguishing. As this *yada* concerns objects as well as persons, it also denotes "to be acquainted with a person" and "to know a person carnally".<sup>97</sup> Especially in Genesis *yada* often has the latter meaning: knowing a person carnally.<sup>98</sup> So purely on the basis of the terms *da'at tob wa-ra* denotes a discriminating power, a knowledge based on experience which comprises everything, both persons and objects, and this is represented by the two halves of the merism: good and bad.<sup>99</sup>

In 2:17 God forbids man to eat of the tree of discriminating knowledge. Unlike the other trees this tree is not associated with sensual enjoyment but with death. This does not mean that this tree of the knowledge of good and bad is only associated with death, as in Landy's view, but that the distinction between life and death arises first in connection with the tree of knowledge. This distinction is associated with the ability of discrimination, the knowledge of the whole that is represented by good and bad.

The link between the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad as described in 2:9b is of vital importance. Here, the two trees occur side by side, but the unusual sentence structure attracts the reader's attention. It says in 2:9b "... the tree of life in the centre of

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knowledge the old translation of "the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" invariably recurs.

<sup>95</sup> This stylistic figure in which two poles (in this case good and bad) express a totality is called a merism. J. Krašovec who extensively researched merism in the Hebrew Bible (Krašovec 1977) defines it as "the art of expressing a totality by mentioning the parts, usually the two extremes, concerning a given idea, quality or quantity; consequently, polar expression is the most usual form of merism." (Krašovec 1983:232).

<sup>96</sup> Jacob (1934), von Rad (1967) and Westermann (1974).

<sup>97</sup> Cf Westermann (1974:393): "*Yada* bezeichnet den Geschlechtsakt häufig im AT. Das Verb bedeutet nicht eigentlich erkennen und wissen im Sinn des objektiven Erkennens, (...) sondern das Erkennen im Begegnung." See also BDB 394.

<sup>98</sup> Gen 4:1,17,25; 19:5,8; 24:16; 38:26.

<sup>99</sup> Cf. also 2 Sam 19:36 and Deut 1:39. In 2 Sam 19:36 the old Barsilai says: "am I still able to make a distinction (imperfect of *yada*) between good and bad?". Deut 1:39: "and your sons, who at the moment do not have knowledge (imperfect of *yada*) of good and bad."

the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad." The spatial indication "in the centre of the garden" is placed immediately after the tree of life and before the tree of knowledge. That is why the part of the sentence containing the tree of knowledge (2:9b $\beta$ ) appears to be separate from, or form an appendix to, the preceding part (2:9b $\alpha$ ) in which the tree of life is mentioned.<sup>100</sup> The diacritic sign of disjunction *zaqep* also reflects this disjunctiveness between the first part (2:9b $\alpha$ ) and the second part (2:9b $\beta$ ). For the reader this sentence structure may function as a syntactic icon. The syntactic form, which testifies to a poor coherence of the two parts of the verse, can function for the reader as a carrier or sign of the semantic content or kernel seme /non-coherence/ or /non-relation/ between the two trees. In other words, in interaction with 2:9b the reader is able to formulate the hypothesis or abduction that the sentence structure indicates that here the two trees are not related.

(b) *Procreation and sexuality; eternal life and death.*

In episode II the tree of life is merely called the tree of life. There is no mention yet of eternal life, but only of life. The tree of knowledge on the other hand has a more explicit name. Both *da'at* and *tob wa-ra* express knowledge based on experience and the discriminatory power which encompasses everything. The first tree, the tree of life, is explicitly mentioned as being situated in the centre of the garden, whereas the place of the second, the tree of knowledge, is not mentioned explicitly. Moreover, in episode II it is allowed to eat of the first tree and not of the second, so the tree of life is accessible and the tree of knowing or discerning is not. The latter tree is related to death. Consequently it can be concluded that in this episode life and knowledge are described as mutually exclusive: it is either living or knowing. Life is accessible and, figuratively and literally, central, while (eating of the tree of) knowledge is prohibited. If man nevertheless eats of the tree of knowledge in spite of the prohibition then death will be the result.

God makes life in this episode: the garden, the trees, the animals and man. He is also the one who introduces all the possibilities for differentiation. In 2:9 he introduces two trees, including the tree of knowledge or discrimination, and in 2:17 he introduces the possibility of death besides that of life, thus creating the conditions for discrimination. The connection between 2:17 and 2:18 makes something else clear as well: in 2:17 *da'at tob wa-ra* is mentioned and in 2:18 God says *lo tob*: it is not good for man to be alone and undifferentiated. Because it is not good for man to be undifferentiated, God creates the distinction between man (human being) and

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<sup>100</sup> This sentence structure has led the exegetes from the literary historical school to distinguish two textual traditions, one yielding the tree of life and the other the tree of knowledge.

animal and between man (male human being) and woman (female human being). Again it is God who wants this distinction and who provides the conditions for discrimination. On the other hand God says that man must not eat of the tree of knowledge or differentiation and he creates death as the limit to life. The reason for this contradiction will only become clear in the next episodes.

But man is not yet ready for this; he pays no attention to the differences, and only enjoys and takes pleasure in the garden, in the trees and their fruits. In spite of the opportunities to discriminate between life and death, he only regards life and unity and not the difference with death. Neither does the prohibition with reference to the tree of discriminating knowledge, which could make him aware of death, make him change his mind. Even the subsequent differentiation between man and woman fails to make him think differently: he celebrates the unity between the two of them and not the difference (2:23). In 2:24 the narrator points forward to a sexual relation between man and woman, but the ignorance of both of them is apparent from 2:25: the otherness of the partner is not perceived. Like death, sexuality is present as a possibility, but it does not materialize, because the knowledge or differentiation which is required is as yet absent.

=Episode III: 3:1-7=

(a) *The tree of life and the tree of knowledge; living and knowing.*

There is only one tree in episode III. It is said of this tree, which stands in the centre of the garden (3:3) as well as of the tree of knowledge (2:17), that God forbade the eating of it (3:3-4). Therefore it may be concluded that the tree mentioned in 3:3 6 is identical to the tree of the knowledge of good and bad; for although it is said in 2:9b that the tree of life stands in the centre of the garden, this does not rule out the possibility that the tree of knowledge also stands in the centre. The sentence construction of 2:9b only indicates that the trees are separate, but is not explicit about the position of the tree of knowledge. Episode III makes clear for the first time that the tree of knowledge is likewise in the centre of the garden. The tree of life is no longer mentioned.

In 3:4-5 the serpent says that by eating of the tree of knowledge "your eyes will be opened". In 3:6 woman perceives the desirability of the tree, she takes and eats, gives to her husband and he too eats. The result of this eating is subsequently described in 3:7 "Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they became aware (*yede'u* from *yada*) that they were naked and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves aprons." What the serpent foretold has become true: the eyes of man and woman are opened, they perceive and become aware of their nakedness. The difference from the end of episode II is clear. In 2:25 they were naked and ignorant, now



they are naked and knowing. They notice the difference between man and woman and this forms the basis for their procreative capacity.

In 3:4b-5 the serpent links life in perpetuity and the knowledge of good and bad to "being like God": "You are not going to die, for God knows (*yodea elohim*) that as soon as you eat of it, your eyes will be opened and you will be like God (*kelohim*), knowing good and bad (*yode'e tob wa-ra*)." The first striking element is the fact that here, and elsewhere in the dialogue between the serpent and woman, God is called *elohim* and not *yhwh elohim* as in the rest of Gen 2-3. They will be like *elohim* and not like *yhwh elohim*. The second characteristic of the verses 3:4b-5 is the fact that neither man (human being) in general, nor man and woman separately, will be like *elohim*, but man and woman together. Although in the dialogue the serpent addresses only woman, three times he uses the plural personal pronoun "you": you, man and woman, will be like *elohim*. The third remarkable fact characterizing these verses is *yada*: it is in *yada* that the connecting element between *elohim* and you, man and woman, has to be found. Eating of the tree of *da'at* gives man and woman a *yada* which makes them resemble *elohim* who knows, *yada*. Two iconic qualities of the text, viz. a morphemic and a textual analogy, offer the reader the possibility of giving meaning to this similarity between *elohim* and man and woman, and to the role *yada* plays in this similarity.

The first iconic similarity, a morphemic one, attracts the reader's attention to the relation between *elohim* and man and woman in Gen 2-3. In the Hebrew linguistic code *elohim* is grammatically a plural form of *eloah* (God) and may have either a plural meaning viz. gods (in the sense of other gods than YHWH) or angels, or a singular meaning, viz. God or godhead.<sup>101</sup> Gen 2-3 takes this convention as its starting point and uses *elohim* in the second sense, as a grammatically plural form with a singular meaning. Gen 2-3 also uses the linguistic convention in which the morpheme *-im* indicates both a marked, in this case masculine plural form and an unmarked, in this case masculine and feminine plural form. This morpheme *-im* can function as a sign or carrier of the similarity between the unmarked, masculine and feminine plural of *elohim* on the one hand and the male and female of the human being on the other. This iconic function of the morpheme *-im* is visible in Gen 3:5, where the plural personal pronoun "you", man and woman, is analogous to the unmarked plural form *-im* in *elohim*.

A second analogy will support this seemingly faint grammatical resemblance. This second iconic similarity is a textual analogy between Gen 1:26-28 and Gen 3:5ff. Gen 1:26-27 says: "And *elohim* said: let us make a man according our image and likeness. (1:26a) And *elohim* created man

<sup>101</sup> See BDB: 43-44 and HAL I: 50-51.

(according to his image) according to the image of *elohim* he created them, male and female he created them." (1:27) It is unusual and so rather striking that *elohim* speaks three times in the first person plural: the morphemes *na-* (we) and *-nu* (us) correspond with the morpheme *-im* in *elohim*. These verses show the parallelism between the three sets of words "according to our image", "according to the image of *elohim*", and "male and female", and reveals that they function as synonymous terms. Verse 1:28a continues with "*Elohim* blessed them and *elohim* said to them: be fertile and numerous and fill the earth and rule over her." Three similarities between Gen 1:26–28 and 3:5ff now become evident. Like Gen 3:5ff, Gen 1:26–28 makes use of the Hebrew linguistic code in which *elohim* is a grammatically plural form with a singular meaning and gives it a specific definition. This definition is characterized by the link between *elohim* and morphemes indicating a plural (us, we), in which the singular meaning of *elohim* is nevertheless retained. A second similarity is that like 3:5ff, 1:26–28 links *elohim* with both the male and female, man and woman. A third similarity is that Gen 1:26–28 is placed within the context of fertility, of filling the earth. Gen 3:5ff is set in the same framework, for *yada* denotes precisely the discriminating knowledge and experience and the carnal knowledge which give man and woman the possibility to bring forth children. But in 3:5 this *yada* is not only ascribed to man and woman but also to *elohim*.

It now becomes clear what the analogy between (the actions of) *elohim* in Gen 1 and *elohim* in Gen 2–3 consists of. What characterizes *elohim* in Gen 1 is the very differentiation and creation, denoted by *yada* in Gen 2–3. Following Beauchamp the actions of *elohim* in Gen 1 can be summarized as "création et séparation".<sup>102</sup> And it is because of this discriminating and creative acting that *elohim* must be linked as a grammatically plural form (with a singular meaning) with the plural morphemes "us" and "we" in Gen 1 and Gen 2–3. For only as an unmarked plural, i.e. both masculine and feminine, can *elohim* be the carrier of a creative power. In this way *elohim* can function as a morphemic icon of the semantic content /to create/ or /to bring forth/. Then the similarity between man and woman and *elohim* is clear too. After eating of the tree of knowledge man and woman are similar to *elohim* in that they are able to discriminate, and so acquire one of the conditions for carnal knowledge or sexual intercourse (*yada*). In this context *elohim* and his creative capacity may be considered as analogous to man and woman and their procreative capacity.<sup>103</sup>

102 P. Beauchamp, *Création et séparation. Etude exégétique du chapitre premier de la Genèse*. Paris 1969

103 Procreative capacity should not be understood here as being able to bring forth, but also as knowing how to bring forth and wanting (or having to) bring forth. In other

In this interpretation of episode III it is felt to be significant that it is only here, in contrast with the rest of Gen 2-3, that *elohim* appears separate from *yhwh*. This use of *elohim* can function for the reader as a sign which has to be taken into account in his interpretation of Gen 2-3. It does not mean that there is an opposition between *yhwh* and *elohim*, but that both components of the compound *yhwh elohim* represent an individual dimension. The dimension which *elohim* represents in episode III and which is described by the term *yada*, is the discriminating and creative capacity.

(b) *Procreation and sexuality; eternal life and death.*

Death exists in episode III only in a negative sense, for in 3:5 the possibility of death is denied. All attention is paid to the tree of knowledge and to life without death. Since this tree offers the power of discrimination, which will be (in episode IV) a condition for a procreative capacity, the eating of the tree of knowledge is a condition for the acquisition of a life in continuation, a perpetual life. Moreover, it will appear that eating of the tree of knowledge, as announced in episode II, will have another effect as well, death. How this combination of life in perpetuity and death is possible, will become clear in episode IV.

=Episode IV: 3:8-24=

(a) *The tree of life and the tree of knowledge; living and knowing.*

By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad man and woman acquire knowledge or the capacity to discriminate: they experience the other as different and they become aware of themselves and of YHWH God as different. The awareness of the other came in episode III, in episode IV the human being becomes aware of himself. Man's awareness of himself as a separate being is underlined by the fact that in verse 3:10 the first person singular of the verb, which does not occur anywhere else in Gen 2-3, is used three times and especially by the explicitly mentioned personal pronoun *anokî* (I). The relation with God also changes. Whereas in episode II no mention is made of any reaction to or dialogue between man and God, even after the prohibition in 2:17, episode IV, for the first time explicitly tells that man is reacting to God and is aware of his difference from God. His reply to God's question "Where are you?" is significant in this respect: "I heard the sound of you in the garden, I was afraid, because I was naked so I hid" (3:10). The human being becomes aware of his nakedness and

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words: capacity is understood here as competence in the structuralist sense of the word, consisting of the three modalities to know how to, to want/have to and to be able to. In episode II the ability to bring forth is established, in episode III the knowledge to bring forth is established and in episode IV (3:16) God will set up the modality having to bring forth, so that man and woman acquire in 3:16 the total competence to procreate.

becomes aware of himself and, by extension, of his difference from God.

It is rather striking that the difference between man and YHWH God should become clear after episode III, the episode in which the resemblance of man and woman to God became clear. To put it more strongly, by the very knowledge which makes them like God, man and woman know the differences between them and YHWH God and they acknowledge him as YHWH. This appears from a number of facts. The first is that man hides himself from YHWH God and fears YHWH God.<sup>104</sup> Man is aware of the difference between himself and YHWH God and as a result of this man acknowledges YHWH God and holds him in awe. The second fact is the obedience which appears in episode IV. Throughout the centuries man's disobedience to YHWH God in episode III has been emphasized, but hardly anybody has ever noticed the obedience which characterizes episode IV.<sup>105</sup> Why should man, who after all has become like God, all of a sudden be afraid of YHWH God and obey him, whereas only recently he did not obey him. The answer is that the discriminatory capacity, which makes him like God, at the same time enables him to see the difference from YHWH God. The third element is the fact that the tree of the knowledge of good and bad is no longer called by this name, nor is it called the tree in the centre of the garden, but "the tree I forbade you to eat of". Prohibition, the relation of authority between YHWH God and man, now occupies a central position. The fact that the tree is called the forbidden tree (it occurs twice, in 3:11 and 3:17) is a sign of this.

The question arises why YHWH God forbade the eating of the tree of knowledge, when this tree not only makes man like God but also gives him the power of discrimination on the basis of which he is able to recognize YHWH God as different and to fear him. Gen 3:8-24 provides an answer to this question. It was made clear earlier in episode III that knowing does not only involve enjoying, but also not enjoying. This was only touched on indirectly in episode III, but in episode IV the dark side of knowing is dwelt on in extenso. Knowing and differentiating, man experiences pain and the biggest distinction possible: the distinction between life and death (3:19,23), which was already announced in 2:17. The phase prior to knowing was characterized by enjoyment, by an experience of harmony and wholeness, the phase which follows after knowledge has been acquired is marked by non-enjoyment, cursing, disharmony and fragmentation. In the first phase there was work and food, but while the work was only mentioned briefly, the emphasis was laid on the eating of abundant and

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<sup>104</sup> This hiding from YHWH occurs relatively often in the Hebrew Bible. The term "to be afraid, to fear" is commonly used to express man's relation of awe and acknowledgement with reference to YHWH ("the fear of YHWH").

<sup>105</sup> With the exception of Humphreys 1985.

good food. In the last phase the heaviness and painfulness of working is described in detail, as well as the meagre and bad food which it produces. To this is also added the effort involved in bringing forth children: not child bearing itself, but the attendant cares are stressed. All of 3:14-20 is marked by that pain and misery, by toiling and labouring (*itsabon, etseb, itsabon* in 3:16,17): the burden not the joys are named. This pain and limitation of life by means of death are the punishment for eating of the tree of knowledge. The phrase "knowledge of good and bad" turns out to be aptly used, because it involves knowledge based on disjunction, disharmony, on the differences represented by the two extremes good and bad. This knowing is opposed to seeing and enjoying, the harmony, the totality and the conjunction. The answer to the earlier question why YHWH God forbade the eating of the tree of knowledge, although that tree makes man both godlike and aware of himself, the other and the differences between himself and God, must be that God meant to prevent man's suffering from the pain and misery which would be the inevitable consequence of the power of discrimination.

The connection between the two trees, the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, can now be made more explicit. After 2:9b the tree of life is only mentioned again in 3:22: "YHWH God said: now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad; what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat and live forever!" The tree of life is no longer just described as the tree of life as in episode II, but as the tree of eternal life. It is difficult to define what makes eternal life eternal, because there is nothing lacking, because there is no reason for distinction or discontinuity, because time does not exist, there is only pure timelessness.<sup>106</sup> The tree of knowledge on the other hand is the tree of differentiation and distinction, of both life and death, and consequently, of history and time. With life limited by death, time is introduced into a world full of differences: history begins at the moment when total life and total death are not realities.

It is said in episode II that man may eat of all the trees in the garden, with the exception of the tree of knowledge; in other words, the tree of (eternal) life is not excluded. In episode III man and woman eat of the tree of knowledge and acquire a discriminatory capacity which enables them to procreate. As a result of this the continuity of episode II has been lost and has been replaced in episode III by distinction. The consequences become clear in episode IV: because of the discriminatory capacity and the procreative capacity history begins, a history of the succession of generations of human beings, of birth, life and death. It now becomes clear that it is not possible to eat of both trees at the same time, as life and death on

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<sup>106</sup> See Davidsen 1982 23.

the one hand and life without the limit of death on the other hand, or the procreative capacity (i.e. the continuation of the species) and eternal life (i.e. the continuation of the individual), time and timelessness, discontinuity and continuity cannot go hand in hand. By eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad the choice is made of life and death, the procreative capacity, time and discontinuity. The history of man begins.

From the moment man acquires knowledge of good and bad, he becomes like *elohim*, but at the same time becomes aware of his being different from *yhwh elohim*. This appears from the awe and fear he feels for *yhwh elohim*. In interaction with episode III and 1:26-28 the reader could make the abduction that there is a similarity between *elohim* and his creative capacity on the one hand, and man and woman and their procreative capacity on the other. In interaction with episode IV and especially with verse 3:22, the reader can adjust and extend this abduction. He can take the two abductions as the basis for his interpretation of the similarities and differences between *yhwh elohim* and man (human being).

Mention was made before of the analogy in Gen 1:26-28 and 3:1-7 between the plural forms *-im* in *elohim*, *-nu* (us) and *na-* (we) referring to the actions of *elohim*, and the plural form you, man and woman, and the plural forms of the verbs referring to the actions of the dual subject man and woman. The basis of this analogy is the knowledge based on experience (*yada*), the discriminating and (pro)creative capacity and it is this very basis which explains the need of these plural forms. Now in episode IV, in 3:22, God refers once again to himself as "us" *-nu*, viz. "one of us". If the above mentioned abduction with respect to the analogy between 1:26-28 and 3:1-7 had not been formulated, the word "us" in 3:22 would have been inexplicable. On the basis of this abduction it is possible to interpret "us" in 3:22 as referring to *yhwh elohim* in general and *elohim* in this compound in particular. It is only natural that the text reads "one of us", as there is no comparison between man and woman and "us" *-elohim-* but between man *-ha-adam-* and "one of us". The singular *adam* cannot correspond with the plural "us".

As *elohim* is linked with the (tree of the) knowledge of good and bad in 3:5, and as in 3:22 the link is made between "us" and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, the reader can formulate on the basis of this textual analogy or textual icon the abduction that in the compound *yhwh elohim*, *elohim* represents the dimension of knowing good and bad and *yhwh* represents the dimension of life in perpetuity. In other words: the reader can formulate the abduction that *elohim* corresponds with the tree of knowledge and that *yhwh* corresponds with the tree of life.

Partly on the basis of his command of the Hebrew linguistic code, the reader can verify this abduction and transform it into a deductive reasoning. In the Hebrew convention *yhwh* is a verb form of *haya*: an

imperfect third person masculine singular of the stem form *qal* or *hifil*, usually assumed to be a *qal*.<sup>107</sup> So there is a correlation between the name *yhwh* and *haya*. to be or become.<sup>108</sup> This "being" is neither static nor without development, but an active and dynamic being, so that *yhwh* literally means. the one who is, the one who is in perpetuity, the one who is always present and active. This corresponds to what in 3 22 is said of the tree of life. that it gives life forever So the name *yhwh* expresses the same as the tree of life life in perpetuity, eternal life, absolute continuity<sup>109</sup>

The compound *yhwh elohim* presents to the reader of Gen 2-3 the quality and possibility to interpret this name in a way analogous to 3.22. As *yhwh* he is the one who exists in continuation and who represents eternal life. As *elohim* he is the one who creates, discriminates and differentiates, who brings forth new life and consequently represents the knowledge of good and bad. As a compound *yhwh elohim* shows that *yhwh* and *elohim* are linked inextricably to each other, the dimensions represented by the two parts form one whole That is why a single linguistic sign, *yhwh elohim*, can represent both continuity and discontinuity, timelessness and time, transcendence and immanence.

The difference between *yhwh elohim* and man (human being) will now be clear. The human being (man and woman) is like *elohim* (3.5,22), because he has eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad and has acquired discriminating and procreative power But he is unlike *yhwh* in that he cannot eat of the tree of life (3 22), and so will not live forever, but only through succeeding generations *Yhwh elohim* both creates and lives forever, man does not live forever but can only survive as a result of his procreative capacity. This difference between man and *yhwh elohim* is the ground for man's acknowledgement of *yhwh elohim*: the human being who lives temporarily acknowledges *yhwh elohim* who is timeless and lives and creates in continuation. *Yhwh elohim* is the only one who unites in

107 See BDB 218 "Many recent scholars explain *yahweh* as Hiph of *haya* the one bringing into being, life-giver, the giver of existence, creator But most take it as *Qal* of *haya*. the one who is, i e the absolute and unchangeable one, the existing, ever-living " As an example of the latter BDB mentions among others Ex 3 12,15 "I shall be with thee I shall be the one who will be ( ) He who will be (i e with thee) "

108 See R Bartelmus, HYH Bedeutung und Funktion eines hebraischen "Allerwelt-wortes" - zugleich ein Beitrag zur Frage des hebraischen Tempussystems ATSAT 17, St Ottilien 1982 This very extensive and thorough monograph on *hwh* in the Hebrew Bible demonstrates that this verb denotes both to be and to become (cf the conclusions on pp 106-114)

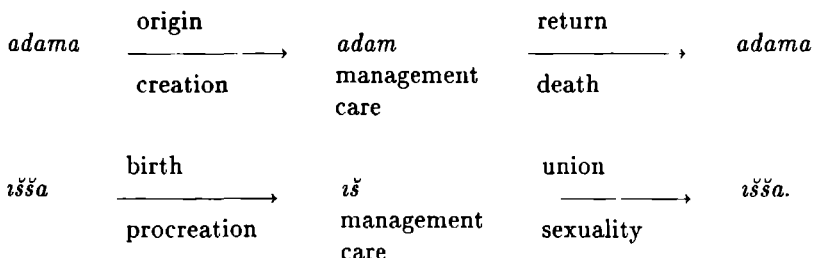
109 This interpretation of *yhwh* is confirmed by Gen 21 33 "And he (Abraham) planted a tamarisk in Beersheba, and invoked there the name of *yhwh*, God (*el*) forever (*le-olam*)" This text describes *yhwh* as the God for eternity, using the same word "forever" *le-olam* as in Gen 3 22 *yhwh* is defined as the continually active being As the tamarisk is an evergreen, it functions as a sign for the eternal aspect of *yhwh*

himself totality and difference, continuity and discontinuity, timelessness and history.

(b) *Procreation and sexuality; eternal life and death.*

By eating of the tree of knowledge man acquires discriminating power, which is a condition for procreative power and continuation of life in the sense of offspring. At the same time he is punished by God, as a consequence of the transgression of his prohibition, with pain and toil, and death in the sense of return to earth.<sup>110</sup> The suffering in pregnancy and childbearing, described in 3:16a, reveals the link between procreation, pain and death. The finiteness of life makes procreation necessary.

In the discussion of the fourth isotopy we already pointed out the relation between man and woman, the analogy between *adama* – *adam* (earth – human being) and *išša* – *iš* (woman – man). As *adam* originates in *adama*, *iš* originates in *išša*; as *adam* manages or takes care of *adama*, *iš* manages or takes cares of *išša*; as *adam* unites with *adama*, *iš* unites with *išša*. In episode II the origin of the human being (*adam*) and man (*iš*) respectively took a central position, and this is expressed by means of *min* “from”. In episode IV origin and return are related to each other, which is expressed by *min* (from) as well as *el* (to). The cycle of existence becomes clear in this way:



(Pro)creation and death are related and follow each other. Sexuality and death are not only linked, but moreover resemble each other in Gen 2–3. Sexuality is described as analogous to death, as a return to an original unity, as a physical union.

This analysis of the elements of meaning in the isotopy “the relation between life and death” can be summarized in the following semiotic square.

<sup>110</sup> Compare Engnell 1955:119 “The result of new ‘knowledge’ is ‘life’, it is true, ‘life’ in the sense of a numerous progeny. But the earth and its vegetation are cursed, the lot of the offspring is hard work, pain, destruction and death.”



**IV 3:8-24**

Tree of knowledge 1

and tree of life

Discrimination, differentiation 2

disjunction, discontinuity

Time, history 3

Suffering; 4

fragmentation of existence

**II 2:7-25**1 Tree of knowledge

and tree of life

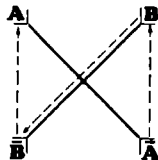
2 Unity

Conjunction, continuity

3 Timelessness

4 Enjoying;

harmony of existence

**III 3:1-7**

Tree of knowledge 1

Realizing the differences 2Conjunction, continuityTimelessness 3Enjoying; 4harmony of existence**I 2:4b-6**

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**6.7 The Semantic Analysis in a Pragmatic Perspective**

Gen 2-3 selected values or elements of meaning from Hebrew culture and used them in construing the text. These values are related to each other in lines of meaning or isotopies which steer the reader in the process of giving meaning to the text. They enable him to connect a network of meanings to the text. The five isotopies of Gen 2-3 together form the so-called "paradigmatic" structure of the text or all the arrangements of the values selected by the text. When all semiotic squares which represent the arrangements of every single line of meaning are combined, a picture can be presented of the paradigmatic structure of Gen 2-3. In this the elements of meaning are represented in their mutual static correspondence.

Apart from a paradigmatic structure each text contains a syntagmatic arrangement of the elements of meaning. Elements of meaning are not only selected, but also presented chronologically to the reader, for a text is not merely a static whole, it also has a dynamic development. This development is represented in the semiotic squares by a (taxonomic) arrow. The paradigmatic arrangement indicates the vertical axis or the axis of

the selection of the values of a text, while the syntagmatic arrangement concerns the horizontal axis or the axis of the combination of values in a text and indicates the order of the selected values.

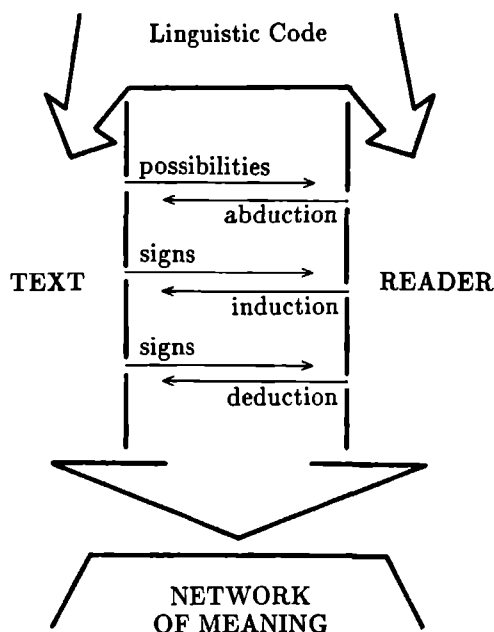
The distinction between paradigmatic and syntagmatic is essential for a semantic analysis. Most Bible exegetes assume that the meanings within a textual unit are static: the meaning at the beginning of a text is assumed to be identical to that at the end of a text. It is rarely recognized that in a text there is a development not only at a narrative, but also at a semantic level. Bible exegesis of this kind is restricted to purely paradigmatically oriented research. In the previous semantic analysis of Gen 2-3 it has become clear what it means to be open to the semantic development of a text. A study of the syntagmatic arrangement of a text guarantees that attention is paid to the internal development in a text.<sup>111</sup>

There is a fundamental connection between the paradigmatic and syntagmatic arrangement at the semantic level and that at the narrative level. The narrative structure determines, on the paradigmatic axis, the static content by arranging the actants and their functions and it determines at the same time, on the syntagmatic axis, the dynamic content by arranging the actions of the actants in one narrative transformation. The semantic structure determines, on the paradigmatic axis, the static content by selecting elements of meaning and relating them to each other, and, on the syntagmatic axis, determines the dynamic contents by presenting different elements of meaning in succession so that a semantic development takes place. It now becomes visible in practice what has already become clear theoretically. There is an analogy between the narrative and the semantic structure, for the paradigmatic and syntagmatic arrangements within the two structures correspond with each other. This analogy becomes evident if the results of the narrative analysis, the narrative transformation as represented in figure 4 (see narrative analysis par. 5.3), are compared with the results of the semantic analysis as represented by the taxonomic arrows in the semiotic squares. That which in the narrative transformation is represented by one general line, consisting of a narrative main programme, three narrative programmes and nine auxiliary programmes, is in the text presented chronologically and semantically in four successive episodes with countless elements of meaning which are subject to development. Apart from this syntagmatic analogy between the narrative and semantic development, the paradigmatic analogy is visible as well: the narrative actants and their actions are semantically defined by numerous elements of meaning.

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<sup>111</sup> As was stated in 6.1.4, the reader's understanding of these semantic openness and development is partly iconically motivated.

In his structuralist semiotics Greimas assumes that the text presents these narrative and semantic paradigmatic and syntagmatic arrangements to the reader and that the reader follows these arrangements. It has, however, become clear from the theory described earlier and from the preceding analysis that the reader himself contributes to these arrangements too and is unmistakably present in the network of meaning which he has created. So the interpretation is not a product of the text, but the arrangements or structures of meaning are the products of the interaction between text and reader. This process of interpretation is represented in the following figure:



The process of giving meaning is a process of interaction to which both the text and the reader contribute. The result of this pendular movement, or dialectic relation, is a textual interpretation which has been brought about by abductive, inductive and deductive reasoning on the part of the reader. This reader is called in this text the "intended" reader, because he is not so much the product of the text (known as the implied reader), but a reader who is intended by the text insofar as he commands the linguistic code and is himself willing to think autonomously and deal with the text

in a creative way, using the possibilities and qualities of the text. The semantic analysis presented here is therefore the result of an interactive process between Gen 2-3 and this reader, and is placed in a pragmatic perspective.

This pragmatic perspective has far-reaching consequences for the interpretation of the semiotic square. In Greimas' semiotic square only the end product of the process of giving meaning is represented and not the process itself, with its abductive and consequently "risky" aspects, with the jumps and analogical reasonings of the reader. Owing to the taxonomic orientation of the semiotics of Greimas and his followers such a semiotic square is taken to be a representation of the structure of a text, as something having a normative or absolute value. This is a result of the fact that Greimas and his followers attribute neither iconic qualities to a text, qualities which the reader is free to use but which are not devoid of risk, nor an abductive activity to the reader, in which the reader makes use of the qualities of the text and defines them on the basis of his own stream of interpretants. This is also the reason why Greimas does not look upon the square as a preliminary end to the interpretation which can be picked up and altered later. In the semantic analysis presented here a semiotic square represents a paradigmatic and syntagmatic arrangement which is no more than a phase in the process of the interaction between the text and the reader. Realizing this does not imply that the usefulness of the semiotic square is denied but that its significance is made less absolute. A description of the taxonomy of a text only focuses on the logical aspects of the text, the aspects based on symbolic sign relations, and does not consider the creative and abductive moments in the previous process of interpretation by the reader in interaction with the text. With respect to the semantic analysis this means that the logical representation, or taxonomic approach, will always have to be extended by an analogical approach and that both will have to be incorporated together in an approach which acknowledges the existence of an interaction between the text and its reader. In this approach the text is the reservoir of possible meanings from which the reader will have to select in order to give meaning to the text. The reader has to formulate risky hypotheses, check them off against the text and arrange them in a coherent interpretation. This interpretation is never finished or final, but is always a phase in a never ending process of interaction between the text and the reader.

## 7. THE DISCURSIVE ANALYSIS

### 7.1 Introduction

#### 7.1.1 Discursive Analysis as Part of Semiotic Analysis

Three stages in the process of interaction between text and reader have been discussed so far. In this process, the text steers the reader by means of strategic designs, while at the same time the reader's own influence on this process of meaning generation increasingly grows. When first confronted with the expression forms of a text, the reader is completely guided by that text. In the narrative process of giving meaning to or interpreting a text, the reader follows the narrative lines and programmes presented by the text, but he also fills in the narrative gaps and arranges the lines in a hierarchical narrative structure. The construction of this narrative structure therefore demands an active reader who has to make choices. In the next phase of the process of interaction, a semantic structure develops which further increases the reader's influence. Although the text steers the reader by presenting its own selection and combination of elements of meaning, it is nevertheless up to the reader to attribute meaning to a text which has a vast supply of possible meanings to offer. On the one hand the reader attributes meaning on the basis of his own command of the linguistic code, on the other hand he checks his abductive theories against the text, and so transforms them into a network of meaning or "interpretant" (a term used by Peirce). The interpretant constitutes the meaning effect of the text on the reader. Both text and reader have contributed to this effect. So the semio-narrative structures which result from these initial three phases of the generation of meaning are not only the structures of the text, as Greimas believes. Instead, they are a network which the reader has placed over the text in an interaction with the strategic design of that text. This network is the relation (*Rel*) established by the reader between the expression forms of the textual signs (*Exp*) and certain conceptual contents (*Cont*): *Exp Rel Cont*, the first or semio-narrative network of meaning.

Peirce's definition of the concept "interpretant" and the distinction he makes between the immediate, the dynamic and the final interpretant make it also easier to distinguish the various types of networks of meaning. The first image, or primary impression, and consequently the first effect of meaning brought about in an individual, is called the immediate interpretant by Peirce. This immediate interpretant corresponds with the results of the analysis of the expression forms, in which the first impression is described which the reader forms on the basis of the external forms of

the text. Peirce's dynamic interpretant is the meaning effect of the textual signs after their absorption and assimilation by the reader; this effect is both the result of the influence of the text and of the process of assimilation by means of abduction, induction and deduction by the reader. According to Peirce this dynamic interpretant corresponds with the first or semio-narrative network of meaning. This dynamic interpretant is followed by the final interpretant, which is created when the reader takes the dynamic interpretant up into his personal stream of interpretants or the whole of his previous reading experience and general experience of life which, in their turn, are interpretants or effects of meaning of earlier processes of meaning generation. This final interpretant is the ultimate result of the process of meaning generation and corresponds with what can be described as the discurso-communicative network. This is the network which the reader adds to the first network of meaning and places over the whole of the text; the function of the text as discourse, or whole of signs, takes up a central position. This network will be discussed in the discursive and communicative analysis.

The discursive analysis will discuss the fourth phase in the interaction process between the text and the reader and will investigate in what way the text guides the reader by means of discursive designs and how the reader assigns new meaning to the previously formed semio-narrative network. In this phase the reader's influence or the process of giving meaning is even greater than in the three preceding phases. The reader constructs a discursive network which he places over the whole discourse, making the first or semio-narrative network the carrier of new meaning, a second new network of meaning: (*Exp Rel Cont*) *Rel Cont*.

The communicative analysis concerns the following phases in the interaction process between text and reader, resulting in a third, fourth or fifth network of meaning that connect the reader with the text and are all part of the final interpretant of a text. These phases involve both the intertextual and extratextual relations as established in the process of interaction between text and reader. The intertextual phase concerns the network of meaning which is created when the reader assigns meaning to the text by relating the relevant text to other texts. The extratextual phase concerns the network of meaning which comes into being when the reader gives meaning to the text by referring to a certain historical context, a certain writer or certain readers in the past. The extratextual phase can also concern the relation which the reader establishes between the network of meaning he has already placed over the text, and the behaviour which results from it. For example, in response to an advertisement, the reader may buy the advertised product. He may modify his behaviour in reaction to an article in the law. He may decide, after reading a Bible text, to live his life according to the principles expressed there. In these commu-

nicative forms, the reader adds to the (first) semio-narrative and (second) discursive networks of meaning a third, fourth or fifth network.

In this analysis of Gen 2-3 we shall only deal with the first two networks of meaning, and consequently with discursive analysis. We shall not consider a communicative analysis, a construction of the networks which are brought about by a comparison with other texts or extratextual facts. We are here concerned with an intratextual examination, which looks into the interaction between the reader and the text of Gen 2-3.

### 7.1.2 The Design of the Discursive Analysis

In the discursive analysis, in which the interaction between discourse and reader occupies a central position, various phases can be distinguished. In a first phase the discursive strategies of the text are given more attention without neglecting the reader's influence. In a later phase the emphasis is on the reader and at the same time attention is paid to the text with its guiding discursive strategies.

The first phase of the discursive analysis refers to the narrational perspective which the narrator holds up before the reader and by means of which he guides the reader.<sup>1</sup> The narrator is the authority which is directly or indirectly present in the text and which presents the story to the reader from a certain perspective. This narrational perspective can be that of the omniscient narrator who is not present in the text as such, or that of a narrator who is explicitly present in the text. The narrational perspective should be distinguished from the perspective of observation or "focalization". The former is the point of view from which the events are told and the latter is the point of view from which the events are observed. These two perspectives, which are present in the text, guide the reader in his positive, negative or neutral appreciation of the contents. Whereas the semantic analysis deals with the process in which the reader, interacting with the text, assigns values and arranges them in a structure of values, the first phase of the discursive analysis deals with the process in which the reader, interacting with the text, assesses it and arranges it in one general evaluation.<sup>2</sup> In his assessment the reader is guided by the

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<sup>1</sup> There is a difference between "narrational" and "narrative". Narrational is the adjective derived from the noun "narration", which is the act or process or an instance of narrating; narrative is the adjective associated with the noun "story", i.e. which is narrated.

<sup>2</sup> Greimas indicates this distinction by means of the terms "taxonomy", or structure of values, and "axiology", or structure of assessment. In his view the axiology is the taxonomy which is enhanced with what he calls the "thymic" category, or the category of positive and negative assessment.

narrational perspective and the perspective of observation. However, in the process of arranging these perspectives in one general evaluation the reader is dominant because his choices and his arrangement are decisive.

The second phase of the discursive analysis refers to the links made by the reader between the various lines of meaning in the text. On the basis of analogies the reader links the relation between God and man, man and the earth, man and animal, man and woman, life and death. For this purpose the reader makes abductions concerning the correlation between the lines of meaning: he checks this correlation by means of inductive reasoning, that is to say by verifying it via the textual elements of Gen 2-3; finally he formulates conclusions by means of deductive reasoning. This process of interpretation via abductions, inductions and deductions results in a discursive network which the reader places over, or connects with, the whole discourse. Although this discursive network is produced in interaction with the text, the reader's influence is considerable because of the dominant abductive moments present in this activity.

The third and last phase of the discursive analysis concerns the fact that the discourse comes to function not only as something which the reader gives identity to, but also as something by means of which the reader gives identity to himself. The reader identifies himself through the text, he is not only active in the attribution of values and assessment, but feels that he is himself involved in the text. The interpretation or attribution of meaning to the text does not occur independently of the reader, but it has an effect on him. The concept of final interpretant mentioned earlier expresses this: the final meaning effect of an interpretative process is part of the thoughts, life and behaviour of the reader.

In this final phase of the analysis it is necessary to focus on an aspect of the generation of meaning which has been more or less neglected so far, i.e. the "index" or "indexicality". The intended reader of a text follows the linguistic code and he makes the linguistic elements function as symbolic signs. He is creative in his approach to the text, fills in gaps and makes the linguistic signs function as iconic signs. But he also establishes a relation between the text and reality as he knows it and so makes the linguistic signs function as indexical signs. In this last phase the reader connects the discursive network which he has placed over the text with himself or with certain other individuals. Just as the semantic analysis refers to "identification", the attribution of values or meanings to textual elements, this part of the discursive analysis refers to "individuation", the connection of meaning with (extralinguistic) individuals. In this last phase of the discursive analysis the reader's role is clearly decisive: he establishes the relation between the discourse and himself, his life and reality.



## 7.2 The Perspectives of the Narration

Gen 2-3 presents the reader with several narrational and observational perspectives which the reader arranges in a single, general and dominant perspective. The reader arrives at this arrangement by means of a (risky) abduction based on the iconic options presented by the text. He then checks them off against the text. In this section the discursive strategies of Gen 2-3, which are used to steer the reader by means of several perspectives, will be discussed first (7.2.1), followed by the definition and description of the dominant narrational perspective (7.2.2). Finally, the relating of the dominant narrational perspective to the other narrational perspectives and the resulting assessment will be discussed (7.2.3).

### 7.2.1 The Discursive Strategies of the Narrator

Gen 2:4b-5 is told to the reader by an omniscient narrator who is not present in the text. The terms “before” and “not”, mentioned twice, characterize the general situation of absence which is described in neutral terms and which guide the reader in an assessment which is neither positive nor negative. This is changed in the following verses, 2:6-14. As a neutral authority the omniscient narrator gives a positive description of the garden and this description is characterized by phrases like “desirable to see” and “good to eat”, and includes an abundance of water, gold, and precious stones. As a result the reader is steered towards a positive appreciation of these verses. Although in 2:15-17 the story is presented in a neutral way by the absent narrator, the contents of 2:17 might evoke a negative appreciation in the reader. This is prevented by the narrator because in 2:18 he immediately continues by offering an inside view of YHWH God.<sup>3</sup> YHWH God is the “focalizer” or observer: YHWH God’s inside view is told by the narrator. The narrator relates YHWH God’s view, which gives his concern for man a central position. By this focalization and his neutral way of telling the story the narrator prevents the possibility of the reader distancing himself from YHWH God and brings about a closeness. In this way the reader is steered towards a positive appreciation of YHWH God, as is underlined by 2:19-23. Here the creation of the animals and of woman is described in neutral terms by the (absent and omniscient) narrator, but the final verse, 2:23, places the whole in a positive perspective. As this verse is told from the focalization of the male and as his strongly positive view is presented to the reader, this verse evokes in the reader a very positive appreciation as well.

The following verse 2:24 is totally different in nature. Unlike the rest of Gen 2-3, in which the narrator is neutral and absent, the narrator is

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<sup>3</sup> See Boomershine 1980:116.

present in this verse and presents his own point of view. Consequently narrator and focalizer, narrative perspective and perspective of observation coincide. In 2:25 the normal narrative order is restored.<sup>4</sup>

Gen 3:1-5 continues the description from a neutral point of view; the uncommon fact that the serpent is presented as a speaking and a wise animal is also presented in neutral terms. In 3:6a the perspective of observation shifts to woman, who is the focalizer of this part of the verse. As in 2:18 YHWH God was close to the reader because he was the focalizer, and as in 2:23 man was close to the reader because he was the focalizer, so in 3:6a the woman is close to the reader because the narrator tells the story from her perspective or perception. Furthermore, her point of view encourages a positive appreciation by the reader. Although in 3:6b-7 the transgression of the commandment is related in neutral terms, 3:6b-7 put a certain strain on the appreciation by the reader, because the prohibition in Gen 2 was placed within the positive context of the garden and YHWH God. This tension is brought about because 3:6a evokes a positive appreciation, while the verses 3:6b-7, because of the connection with 2:15-17, evoke a negative appreciation. This tension evokes in the reader a negative appreciation of 3:8-19 when the consequences become clear. The closeness and the points of view of characters in the story have disappeared, and a neutral description, that is to say a description not from the point of view of a textual focalizer, but from the point of view of a neutral narrator, evoking distance, becomes dominant. This discursive strategy directs the reader towards a negative appreciation.

The last verses of Gen 3 show yet another change. In 3:20 the perspective of observation or focalization shifts to man: his positive view of woman is expressed in the name he gives her. The positive result of the transgression is presented to the reader by the neutral narrator. In this way the appreciation, undividedly negative so far, is adjusted and supplemented by a positive contents. In verse 3:21 the clothing of man by God is presented from the point of view of a neutral narrator. The next verse 3:22 offers a last inside view. YHWH God is the focalizer and it is his point of view which is presented by the narrator. In 3:22a the description by YHWH God still seems to be merely factual, but 3:22b (*we-atta pen*, what if/lest) proves that this appreciation is negative. In 3:23-24 the inside view of YHWH God ends and the omniscient narrator continues with a description of man's expulsion from the garden of Eden. In view of the fact that this garden was described in such positive terms in Gen 2, and evoked a positive appreciation in the reader, and considering the negative implications of the words "expel" and "send away", "guard" and "sword",

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<sup>4</sup> Boomershine (1980:117), wrongly, makes no distinction between the narrative perspective of 2:24 and 2:25.

the reader is directed by 3:23–24 towards a negative appreciation.

In short, the various narrative perspectives and perspectives of observation are discursive strategies which guide the reader toward positive and negative assessments. The reader is not guided in one but various directions. The narrative and semantic analysis already make it clear that the text has a large variety of possibilities from which the reader has to choose and arrange his choices via abductive, inductive and deductive inferences. This also appears to be characteristic of the text in a discursive respect. The text presents positive and negative narrative perspectives and perspectives of observation, but it is the reader who has to make these various perspectives coherent and to arrange them.

### 7.2.2 Arrangement within One Narrational Perspective

In Gen 2–3 the narrator is omniscient, for he does not only offer an account of the creation of man, the animals, and the plants but also of the observations and thoughts (inside views) of YHWH God, man and woman. The reader obtains his information from this omniscient narrator, but as the narrator evokes appreciations which frequently vary, he has to make a selection from them and arrange them. Only once does the narrator present his own point of view directly, viz. in 2:24, which is why this verse is of great importance for the narrational perspective of Gen 2–3 and why the reader has to use this verse as the basis of his arrangement of the various perspectives into one whole.

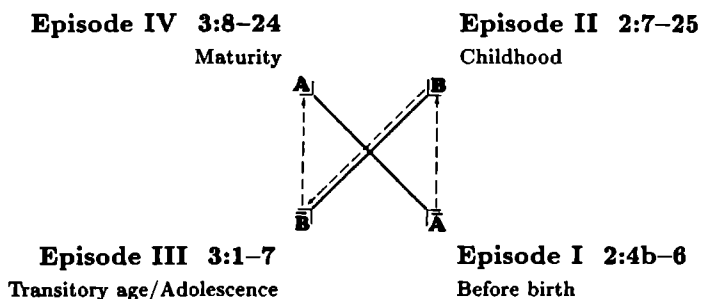
In the description of the garden of Eden and of the creation of woman the narrator breaks as it were into the story with a conclusion which has nothing to do with the plot of the story. “Hence a man will leave his father and mother, and will cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh.” (2:24) Three components can be distinguished in this personal view of the narrator. The first one is “his father and mother” *abw we-immo*. The father and the mother are the initiators and educators who provide man with his possibilities and capacities. Education is not explicitly mentioned in 2:24, but the terms “his father and mother” imply that they came before man, that they are present at the beginning of his life and bring him up as an independent being. The second component is “leaving” *ya’azob*: man will leave his father and mother to stand on his own two feet. The father and mother mark man’s infancy, the term “leaving” expresses a transitional phase, the transition from childhood to a more independent form of living. The third component of 2:24 is “to cling to his wife” *dabaq be-ışto* and “to become one flesh” *le-basar eḥad*. This marks man’s maturity: man can cling to his wife and they can become father and mother in their turn. In other words, in 2:24 the narrator offers his view of the process of man’s growing up and presents this directly to the reader. Now the reader can

at once see the iconic quality of this verse, use it while giving meaning to the text and make the abduction that there is an analogy between 2:24 and the whole of Gen 2-3.

In Gen 2 YHWH God is the initiator and educator of man. He exists prior to man (2:4b-6), is at the beginning of man's life (2:7) and provides him with opportunities and capacities (2:8-23). YHWH God is therefore analogous to father and mother, to the parents of 2:24. The reader may interpret the word "leave" *ya'azob* in 2:24 as an iconic sign par excellence: as man leaves his father and mother to become independent, so man, male and female, leaves YHWH God by means of his transgression of the prohibition in 3:1-7 to become independent. The general truth, necessity almost, of leaving is apparent in 2:24 both from *alken* "therefore" as well as the imperfect tense of *ya'azob* indicating intention. Man, and analogous to him, the human being, "has to" take the step towards independence himself. In Burns' (1987:11) apposite terms: "Freedom, like power, is something that cannot be given; it can only be taken. What Adam and Eve took was the one thing God could not build into his creature." Humphreys (1985:76) refers to "necessary disobedience" in this context. This disobedience is not only necessary from the perspective of man and the human being, but also from the perspective of the parents and YHWH God, because both raise man to independence. The narrator in 2:24 already makes it clear: only by leaving his parents can man become independent and ensure off-spring and life in perpetuation together with his wife. The analogy between 3:8-24 and the third component of 2:24 now becomes clear: by becoming independent and by clinging to his wife (2:24), man and woman can bring forth children and become parents themselves (3:8-20).

The realization that verse 2:24 presents man's process of development in a nutshell and the realization that a similar behaviour can be observed in man's attitude towards YHWH God, makes the reader aware of the fact that Gen 2-3 is really one extensive description of this growth. The reader now realizes that episode I (2:4b-6) describes man before his birth; YHWH God is the only one who exists. Episode II (2:7-25) manifests itself as an image or symbol of infancy: man is created by YHWH God and provided with competencies. Man lives in perfect delight and harmony without being troubled by pain, differences or differentiations. The garden of Eden represents this harmonious period of infancy. In this episode, the period of infancy, the narrator in 2:24 points forward to maturity and consequently he announces to the reader what is following. In episode III (3:1-7) the transitional period in man's life is described: man resists the prohibition expressed by YHWH God and takes the initiative. He acquires discriminating power, which makes the transition to maturity possible. Episode IV (3:8-24) finally describes man's maturity: man possesses discriminat-

ing power which is a condition for his procreative capacity or knowledge of good and bad, the paradigm of maturity *par excellence*.<sup>5</sup> The delight that was so characteristic of childhood has in adulthood been replaced by toil and pain, life without labour has been replaced by an industrious life, life without children by life with children and life without death by life with death. Man has grown up. This can be represented by the following semiotic square.



There have been various authors in the history of exegesis, such as Driver (1904), Gunkel (1922) and Cassuto (1961) who have recognized in Gen 2-3 a growth towards maturity. Cassuto (1961: 113-114) is the most explicit of them all in this recognition: "Before they ate of the tree of knowledge, the man and his wife were like small children, who know nought of what exists around them; and it is precisely in connection with small children that we find a similar expression in Deut 1:39: "and your children, who this day have no knowledge of good and evil, that is, they know nothing." When man was created he was simple as a new-born child. (...) Out of fatherly love the Lord God forbade him to eat of the fruit, which would have opened before him the gateway to the knowledge of the world, the source of care and pain (...). But man transgressed the prohibition, like a child who is under the suppression of his father and is constantly dependent on him; he wanted to learn by himself of the world around him, and to act independently on the basis of this knowledge." The interpretation offered by authors like Driver, Gunkel and Cassuto is not just a textual one, but

<sup>5</sup> This interpretation of the knowledge of good and bad as discriminating power and procreative capacity, and consequently as a paradigm of maturity is underlined by other texts in the Hebrew Bible. Cassuto and others point out the parallel to Deut 1:39. Buchanan (1956) describes how in many texts in the Hebrew Bible and Qumran the phrase "knowledge of good and bad" indicates the age of twenty, relating the phrase consistently to the transition from childhood to adulthood and maturity. In his view it indicates the power of decision and responsibility.

also has a rather psychological orientation. Semiotic analysis has made clear that the reader can interpret Gen 2:24 as an iconic representation of Gen 2-3, which strengthens the textual basis of this interpretation. It has furthermore become apparent that an arrangement of the entire discourse from the narrational perspective of 2:24 is in close correspondence with the definition of the knowledge of good and bad.

### Excursus: a semiotic analogy

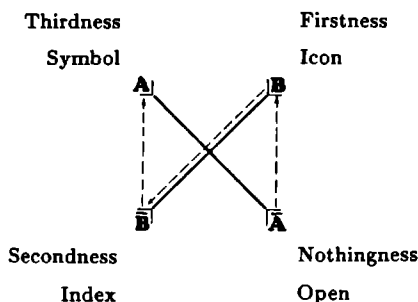
In his semiotics Peirce describes thinking and knowing as a process of interpretation or semiosis which is determined by three categories. The first category is called Firstness or Potentiality, the discovery of possibilities in the world which are represented by iconic qualities. The second category is called Secondness or Actuality, the confrontation of possibilities with facts. Something may be possible, but it should also be related to (experienced) reality for it to function usefully in thinking or knowing. This second category or this second moment in the process of giving meaning is possible as a result of the indexical relations between thinking and (experienced) reality. The third and last category is called Thirdness or Law: the confrontation of the possibilities with the realities results in an idea or meaning which can start to function permanently as a fixed image of (experienced) reality.

In a stimulating article Eugen Bär offered two interesting additions to Peirce's interpretation.<sup>6</sup> First he shows that in Peirce the three categories or moments Firstness, Secondness and Thirdness are preceded by yet another category. For all thinking is preceded by an unlimited nothing, an absolute openness which Bär calls "Nothingness". Starting from this Nothingness people begin to assign meaning to discover possibilities and these are taken as the basis of the process of interpretation (Firstness). These possible meanings are confronted with and related to people's actual experiences (Secondness) and the results are absorbed as fixed ideas, convictions or conventions (Thirdness). By adding this fourth category of Nothingness to the other three, Bär is able to make a second addition, for he can link Peirce's views with Greimas' semiotic square. Bär presents the iconic, indexical and symbolic signs as well as the new fourth term "open" in a semiotic square. In this square, symbol ( $\bar{A}$ ) and icon ( $B$ ) are placed at the top and open ( $\bar{B}$ ) and index ( $\bar{A}$ ) at the bottom. At the same time he indicates the development which takes place from open to icon, from icon to index, and from index to symbol. In my opinion Bär places open and index in the wrong position in the square (bottom left and bottom right respectively) so that the implication relation runs from the top to the bottom (from  $B$  to  $\bar{A}$ ) instead of from the bottom to the top, which is usually the case in Greimas' square.

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<sup>6</sup> Bär 1986:140-152.

By following Bär's idea and correcting him with respect to the two terms mentioned, we can represent the four categories and the signs in the following semiotic square.

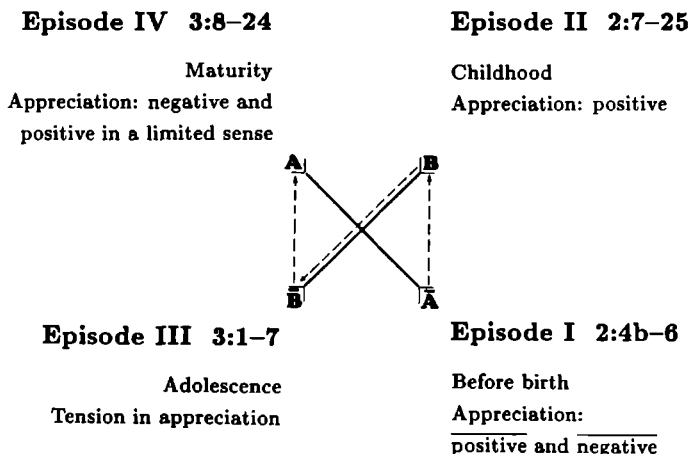


In Gen 2-3 the growth of man is described as a process which begins before birth (episode I), and develops via childhood (episode II) and adolescence (episode III) to maturity (episode IV). There are great similarities between the way this growth is described in Gen 2-3 and the growth in meaning as described earlier in Peircean semiotic terms. Episode I is characterized by Nothingness. The transition between episode I and episode II is considerable, it is the step from Nothingness to being, which cannot be explained by semiotics. Gen 2-3 explains this transition as the creative power of YHWH God. Episode II describes the childhood as a period of harmony and enjoyment. Episode II represents the iconic quality and presents it in a way analogous to the category Firstness. Episode III shows the transitory age or adolescence, the period of confrontation. It represents the indexical conflict and this takes place in a way analogous to the category Secondness. Episode IV represents maturity, the triadic or symbolical correlation, in a way analogous to the category Thirdness. In other words, the description of man's growth towards maturity in Gen 2-3 reflects, or is a reflection of the growth in meaning: a growth from nothing (I), via a quality or possibility (II) and a confrontation or relation (III) to a correlation (IV).

### 7.2.3 The Narrational Perspectives and the Reader's Assessment

The reader has placed the discourse of Gen 2-3 in a single, general perspective on the basis of the iconic quality of 2:24 and by means of abductive reasoning. The question now arises how this perspective can be combined with the other narrational and observational perspectives of Gen 2-3 and the strategies that steer positive and negative assessments, as described in 7.2.1.

In 7.2.1 it appeared that episode I evoked a neutral appreciation in the reader rather than a negative or positive one. Episode II guides the reader in the direction of a positive appreciation. Neither does the prohibition of YHWH God, which is immediately followed by a positive inside view of YHWH God, simply evoke a negative appreciation. This positive appreciation is even underlined by the celebration in 2:23. This episode, which represents childhood within the whole of the discourse, evokes a purely positive appreciation in the reader. In episode III the appreciation evoked is analogous to the contents: the tension between the positive and negative appreciation corresponds with the contents of the transitional phase or adolescence. Man acquires a discriminatory power but, apart from an initial effect in 3:7, it is not until the next episode that the full impact appears. The phase of maturity described in episode IV evokes in the reader a differentiated appreciation in which the negative is predominant, although there are positive moments as in 3:20 and 3:21. These appreciations which are added to the values can be summarized in the following semiotic square.



So the reader is confronted with what Humphreys (1985:74-76) calls "a paradox of the fortunate fall": "There is an irony in the fact that...through the violation of the divine prohibition...the child becomes adult and produces children in turn. (...) "A paradox of the fortunate fall." Much was lost in the Fall but much gained as well, and the paradox centers in the inexorable link between the two. (...) Growing up is good. We celebrate maturity and the wisdom that can grow in ourselves and others. But the first step down this path leads out of the garden, for it is the path of



disobedience of god-given prohibitions, even if for mature humanity a necessary disobedience." (This statement occurs in Humphreys in a different context than the present one. He feels (78) that the result is merely positive; but the fact that man accepts the punishment makes clear that for him God's prohibition was right and the transgression wrong. Humphreys says that the larger context makes clear that Gen 3 is the beginning of a series of destructive actions which causes pre-history to present increasing chaos within the created order.)

The reader is confronted with discursive strategies which direct him to superimpose a certain axiological network of appreciations on the episodes of Gen 2-3, which varies from a positive appreciation of episode II to a negative and, only very limited, positive appreciation of episode IV. On the other hand there is the discursive strategy of the narrator's perspective in 2:24 on the basis of which the reader can arrive at the interpretation that the transition between childhood and maturity is necessary and in that sense good for man and woman so that they can bring forth children together.

Consequently the reader has to arrive at an interpretation or one single discursive arrangement, interacting with the various possibilities offered by the text. In this connection the reader's contribution is therefore of great importance. It is not surprising that the reader comes up with the arrangement that suits him best. This also explains why in church tradition often an interpretation of the discourse of Gen 2-3 was chosen in which the axiological guidance played a predominant role and in which Gen 2-3 is interpreted as man's fall.<sup>7</sup> The starting point is that on the basis of text and tradition this is the only possible interpretation of Gen 2-3 and that the reader did not contribute to the interpretation. Consequently this seems to be a compulsory interpretation for every reader. On the basis of the text of Gen 2-3 and the semiotics of the interaction between text and reader it appears that the reader can also opt for a different interpretation. At the same time it is evident that the interpretation of Gen 2-3 as man's fall is solely based on 2:15-17 and 3:1-19 and on axiological steering. The text does not only contain elements which may lead to a different interpretation: apart from this, the tradition is not as unambiguous as has often been supposed.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> J. Holman (1986, especially 37-39) showed that apart from a predominantly Augustinian tradition in which Gen 2-3 is interpreted as man's fall and placed within a theology of the original sin, there is also a Franciscan tradition which does not place Gen 2-3 in this theology of original sin.

<sup>8</sup> Augustine was the first who, thirteen centuries after the origin of Gen 2-3, placed this story in the christological perspective of original sin and began to interpret it as a story of the fall. This interpretation was very unusual in the first centuries of the Christian era too, as E. Pagels described in her recently published book *Adam, Eve and the Serpent*

It appears from the analysis of the narrative and semantic strategies of Gen 2-3 and from the analysis of the discursive strategy of 2:24 that the reader gives the (iconic) qualities and possibilities of the text their maximum due when he arranges the text from the perspective of "the growth towards maturity of man". The discursive steering of 2:24 and the axiological steerings are not opposed to each other in this, but are signs which represent to the reader the ambiguity of the process of man's maturity. The double discursive steering in the text makes the non-singularity or ambiguity of man's life palpable and manifest to the reader. In that sense the text is an iconic quality to which the reader can attribute multiple emotions and meanings. The garden of Eden is here the representamen or sign of a blissful and innocent childhood, the transgression the representamen of the painful acquisition of autonomy in adolescence, and the expulsion from the garden of Eden the representamen of maturity, responsibility, of knowing and suffering. The reader can experience the ambiguity, plurality and riches of the discourse of Gen 2-3 by the addition of respectively positive, negative and mixed appreciations.

### 7.3 Analogies as the Basis of a Single Discursive Network

In interaction with the narrative strategies of Gen 2-3 the reader has arranged the text as a story which denotes how man becomes competent to till the earth in perpetuity, and how the earth, with man as its manager and tiller, becomes competent to produce crops (see the conclusions of the narrative analysis in 5.4). In interaction with the semantic strategies of Gen 2-3 the reader has arranged the text as a collection of relations of meaning between God and man, man and earth, man and animal, man and woman, life and death, which are all given shape by an increasing differentiation, arrangement and relationing (see the results of the semantic analysis). In interaction with the narrational perspective of 2:24 (described in the discursive analysis of 7.2) the reader has arranged Gen 2-3 as a

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(1988) (an excerpt of her book has been published earlier in the *New York Review* of 12 May 1988, 28-37, from which I cite.) In these early centuries, "freedom" was considered to be the first message of Gen 2-3: man's moral right to self-determination. In the days of the Roman Empire in particular many martyrs and church fathers, such as Gregory of Nyssa, referred in this way to Gen 2-3. "For in the Hebrew account of creation God gave the power of earthly rule to adam - not to the king or emperor, but simply to "mankind"." (28) Augustine broke with this interpretation (by that time Christianity had become the official religion in the Roman Empire): "In place of the freedom of the will and the royal dignity of humanity, Augustine argued for the bondage of the will (...) of "original sin"." (28) Nevertheless Augustine's interpretation became the norm and "tradition", even though there were many before and after him who offered a different interpretation of Gen 2-3. But they were placed outside the tradition. (See also Holman 1986.)

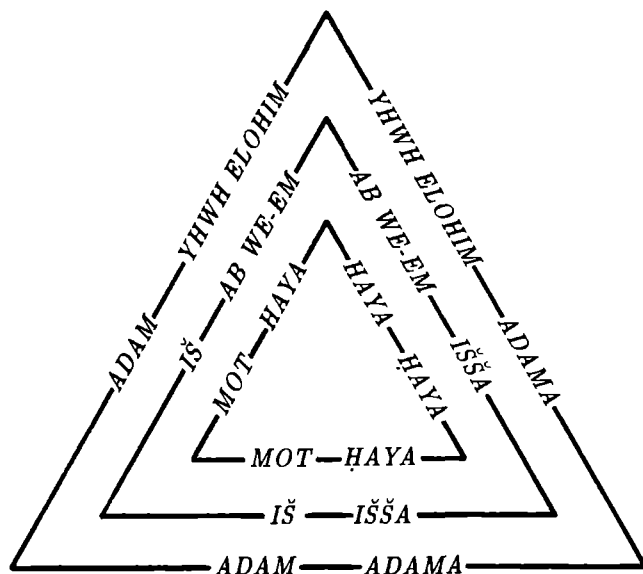
discourse in which man grows to maturity. On the basis of all these data the reader is now able to perceive analogies or similarities. He is able for instance to perceive immediately an analogy between the increasing competence of man as expressed in the narrative analysis, and the growth to maturity of man as expressed in the discursive analysis. It is clear from the semantic analysis, however, that there is a greater complexity than this simple analogy between the narrative and discursive structure seems to suggest. Gen 2-3 makes it clear from the semantic point of view that man (human being) does not stand alone: YHWH God, human being, man and woman, animals and earth are related to each other. As these relations have been discussed separately in the semantic analysis, it is the task of the reader or analyst to connect the relations in a discursive analysis and to arrange them in a single network of correlations. The reader or analyst assumes that it is possible to place a single discursive network over the separate relations. By means of the iconic qualities of the text he formulates hypotheses or abductions concerning possible connections between relations. He then checks these abductions off against the text, in order to be able eventually to formulate a conclusion about the correlations in Gen 2-3.

On the basis of the linguistic sign *abad*, which means to till and to serve, the reader makes the abduction that there is a correlation between man's relation with earth and the relation between YHWH God and man, and between man's relation with earth and that of YHWH God and earth. The reader verifies this abduction by means of inductive reasonings. Gen 2-3 shows that it is YHWH God who creates man of earth, orders him to till the earth, both in the garden and outside it, and to return to earth. Moreover Gen 2:4b-5 shows that only God, with the exception of the omniscient narrator, knows that the earth does not produce any vegetation without man. Verses 2:17b-19.23 present YHWH God as the one who orders man to till the earth. By doing so God creates the conditions which enable the earth to produce plants. In other words: by means of this inductive reasoning the reader checks his abductive inference and is able to deduce that the three relations YHWH God - man, YHWH God - earth and man - earth in Gen 2-3 are linked.

On the basis of the iconic quality of 2:24 the reader makes the abduction that there is a correlation between the relation between man and woman and the relation with the father and the mother. The reader verifies this abduction not so much via the text as by means of his own experience of reality: the father and mother or the parents give birth to children, bring them up to independence so that they in their turn are able to enter into relations with other men and women. The resulting deduction formulated by the reader is that the three relations man - woman, parents - man, and parents - woman are linked.

On the basis of the iconic quality of the name *yhwh elohim*, which represents both being-in-continuation and creative power, and on the basis of the analogy in 3:22 between this name and the tree of life and the tree of knowledge, the reader makes the abduction that YHWH God is linked with (eternal) life. The reader can check this abduction off against the text, but he must also complement it. YHWH God exists from the beginning: before everything else exists, YHWH God is. He creates all life and is consequently linked with life. What is more, it appears from 2:17 and 3:17–19.23 that YHWH God also creates death and the conditions for death. From this follows that YHWH God is related to life as well as death, to being (*haya*) which comprises both. On these ground the reader can make the deduction that in Gen 2–3 a triad of relations is visible between life *haya*, death *mot* and being *haya*.

These three correlations can be represented in the following figure.



It is interesting that in these three correlations, which are represented in three triangles, the reader is able to perceive analogous relations and use them as the basis of his discursive network. The reader is, for instance,

able to perceive an analogy between the two outermost triangles. The semantic analysis (3.5.2) already made clear that the relation between *adam* and *adama* is analogous to the relation between *iš* and *išša*: as man manages the earth and the earth produces crops for the benefit of man, so man provides for woman and woman brings forth children. When the reader surveys the entire discourse he is able to place these two relations within a wider context, because it is possible for him to connect these relations with a third component, *yhwh elohim* and *ab we-em* (parents) respectively. In the first correlation it is YHWH God who directs and coordinates the relation between man and earth, that is to say he precedes and controls this relation. Consequently YHWH God combines within himself the male function of management and the female function of giving life. The same holds for the parents, since they are the ones who in the second correlation precede and direct the relation between man and woman, and combine the male and female functions in themselves. YHWH God and the parents constitute the "summit" of the coordination point which creates and controls the basis, but man and earth, man and woman have a relative independence and autonomy. For man takes care of the earth according to his own insights and responsibility, the earth produces crops according to her own ability; man takes care of woman according to his own insights and responsibility, woman brings forth children according to her own ability. In this man is as dependent on earth as earth is on man, and man is as dependent on woman as woman on man. In other words, as man is a man only in relation to woman, so woman is a woman only in relation to man. The reader who takes this analogy between the correlations as the basis of the discursive process of giving meaning, is furthermore made aware of something else: he now sees that parents only become parents when they have brought forth and raised children, man and woman. This gives them their identity as father and mother. By analogy, YHWH God too becomes YHWH God only in relation to man and earth. By creating and controlling, by forming the beginning and point of orientation, YHWH God acquires his identity in Gen 2-3 only in relation to man and earth.

A second analogy can be distinguished, that is to say between the two inner triangles and consequently between all triangles or correlations. It already became evident in the semantic analysis (6.6.2) that in Gen 2-3 sexual intercourse between man and woman is described as being analogous to death, to man's return to earth. Sexuality is related to death, while its product is new life. Origin and return, sexuality or (pro)creation and death are described as analogous to one other. In the discursive analysis the reader can detect a connection in which YHWH God is the one who exists and creates, orientates and co-ordinates. He "is" and this "being" should not be taken in a Greek philosophical sense as transcendental being, but as industrious or active, as being in generation and in relation to others.

As with the analogy described above the third component proves to be the point of co-ordination. The point which makes the other two possible but which itself also exists only in correlation to life and death.

On the basis of these analogies the reader can connect one discursive network with Gen 2-3. This network shows Gen 2-3 to be a real creation story which tells how the basic components life and death, man and woman, man/woman and parents, man and earth, God and man, only come into being and become meaningful in mutual relations. The reader can place this complex of relations and correlations in a certain hierarchy: the correlation YHWH God-man-earth is the dominant one which comprises most, the correlation between parents and man and woman and the correlation between being, life and death are contained in it.

In the earlier semantic analysis considerable attention was paid to the creation and growth of man. In the discursive analysis the reader is able to become aware of the fact that not only the growth of man but also the growth of YHWH God is of major importance. While God is still denoted as *elohim* in Gen 1, the name for God in Gen 2-3 is *yhwh elohim*. Gen 2-3 is the only text in the book of Genesis in which God is called *yhwh elohim*, for after Gen 2-3 (starting with Gen 4:1) either *yhwh* or *elohim* occur. On this basis the reader is able to formulate the abduction that *elohim* acquires his identity as *yhwh* in Gen 2-3.<sup>9</sup> The reader can render this identity of YHWH God concrete by means of inductive reasoning from the relations which form YHWH God. In Gen 1 *elohim* is described as a transcendental godhead, who is at the beginning of all, and creates and establishes all. In Gen 2-3 *yhwh elohim* is also the one who is at the beginning and who creates, but at the same time he is continuously in correlation with man and earth, he is a dynamic presence in history and he operates through the relations with others. In this way the *elohim* of Gen 1 acquires his identity as *yhwh* in Gen 2-3, as he who "is" in relation to creatures. Gen 2-3 shows that this *yhwh* who participates in the history of man, animals and earth is still the same *elohim* who in Gen 1 was described as the creator. Once *yhwh elohim* has acquired this identity in Gen 2-3, he can act as *yhwh* (or as *elohim* who is identical with *yhwh*) in the rest of Genesis.

A semiotic reading of Gen 2-3 is in this respect completely different from other forms of exegesis. Critics like Jacob (1934) and Cassuto (1961) attribute an identity to *yhwh elohim* in Gen 2-3 primarily on the basis of the Tora, and by projecting on to Gen 2-3 the crystallized view of YHWH contained in the Tora. The basic difference in interpretation is that in the exegesis of these and other authors, contents and meaning are taken to

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. also BDB (lemma *yhwh*): "J uses *yhwh* from the beginning of his narrative, possibly explaining it."

be static, and the possibility of a development in the contents is hardly acknowledged. The position adopted is not that of the intended reader who reads (or hears) Genesis from beginning to end, but that of the reader who is familiar with all the texts of the Tora and who brings his knowledge to bear on the process of giving meaning to any part of the Tora, including Gen 2-3, a text which occurs at the very beginning. Their generation of meaning is based on the principle of homologation, the combination and reduction to the same denominator of contents of widely divergent texts, in which the individuality of a text receives less emphasis than its similarities with other texts. A semiotic analysis on the other hand puts the text and the intended reader in a central position, and is concerned with the reader who arrives at a particular meaning or interpretation on the basis of the text in front of him.

The text of Gen 2-3 also offers the reader every occasion to detect a development in its contents and to attribute meaning to the typical qualities of Gen 2-3. A first indication is the specific compound *yhw h elohim*, which occurs nowhere else in Genesis. This compound offers the reader the iconic quality or possibility to distinguish the text from other texts and to do justice to the individual character of the text. Gen 2-3 does not only deal with the genesis of man in relation to earth and to the differences between man and woman, but as a result of the compound *yhw h elohim* the reader is made to realize that Gen 2-3 also deals with the genesis and the definition of *yhw h elohim* in relation to earth and to man. It is this perspective of *yhw h elohim*, earth as well as man, which in a semiotic analysis of Gen 2-3 is offered to the reader instead of the usual one-sided man-oriented or man-centered view.

A second indication for development in the contents appears from the rest of Gen 2-3. In Gen 2-3 the relation between YHWH God and man is described from the point of view of YHWH God: YHWH God acts as *yhw h* and as *elohim* with respect to man, but man's acknowledgement of *yhw h elohim* is still fairly indirect. To be sure, man listens to YHWH God and obeys his commandments in 3:16-24, but as yet there is no question of man focusing on God of his own accord, let alone of invoking or adoring him. This only happens in Gen 4:26, which reads "Seth too had a son, whom he named Enosh. At that time men invoked the name YHWH for the first time."<sup>10</sup> As *enoš* means "man" it is clear that the invocation of YHWH by man begins at this point.

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<sup>10</sup> J.P.Fokkelman, (*Narrative Art and Poetry in the Books of Samuel. Vol II: The Crossing Fates*. Assen, 1986: 721-722.) makes plausible that in six texts of the Hebrew Bible *halal* hifil has the meaning of "for the first time" (which is usually rendered as "to begin to"), viz. Gen 4:26; 9:20; 10:8; Judg 16:19; 2Sam 14:35b and 1Chron 1:10. He does not mention *halal* in Gen 6:1, which may possibly have the same meaning of "for the first time".

A third and last indication for the development in the contents which argues against a static interpretation of meaning is that in Gen 2-3 man acquired his identity through his relations with earth and the animals, through his differentiation in man and woman, and through the limitation imposed on his life by death, but not through the relation between man and man. This relation is not described until Gen 4. Gen 4:1-16, the story of Cain and Abel, deals with the relation between two brothers and it is YHWH who puts every emphasis on this brotherhood. Gen 4:17-25 next describes the relations between the subsequent generations of men, of which Lamech is the most fully developed example. When man is also defined by the relations with other people, in particular that of brotherhood, the final relation between man and YHWH can be described "At that time men invoked the name of YHWH for the first time".<sup>11</sup> At that moment the history of creation is completed by the establishment of the mutual relation between YHWH and man.

In conclusion it can be said that the discursive network which the intended reader places over the discourse of Gen 2-3, is formed by analogous correlations. In this network the reader interprets Gen 2-3 as a creation story in which man himself is not central, one in which the development of a total of correlations forms the nucleus. Within the correlation, the one between YHWH God, man and earth is the central one and the development of the other correlations which define man is analogous but subordinate. This network makes clear that man and God acquire their identity through differentiation, through that which distinguishes them from each other and the others and through that which unites them with the others. Gen 2-3 then turns out to be a story which deals with the installation of the real and individualizing correlations between YHWH God, earth and man, parents, woman and man, and being, life and death.

#### 7.4 The Reader's Identification by Means of the Discourse

The reader does not only identify the text but he also assigns meaning to himself by means of the text. The reader does not read Gen 2-3 simply as a fairy tale, but as a discourse which is meaningful to his life and reality. Textual values become values for the reader on a discursive level. The reader can read Gen 2-3 on the basis of the symbolic sign relations, the relations between linguistic signs and the Hebrew linguistic convention.

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<sup>11</sup> In Gen 21:33 is a similar phrase: "And Abraham planted a grove in Beersheba and invoked there the name of *yhwh*, the everlasting God (*el*)". Here the same description is used for the relation between man and *yhwh*: invoking the name of *yhwh*. *Yhwh* is also described in the same terms in Gen 2-3, as the everlasting godhead *el*.



He may be struck by a certain similarity and discover a link between one linguistic sign and another; in other words he may discover new meaning on the basis of an iconic relation of signs. He may also interpret the text as referring to (extralinguistic) reality and in this sense actualize the text, make the text real for himself. This actualization takes place on the basis of indexical sign relations. The iconic sign is a quality which enables the reader to interpret the text as referring to something else, but its function as an icon depends in a very real sense on the assigning of meaning by the reader. True, the indexical sign is also dependent on the reader in so far as it is interpreted as referring to a particular reality, but the indexical sign would never be able to acquire the status of sign if that which it refers to did not exist. Therefore the indexical sign, like the icon, has to be recognized by the reader as referring to something else, but as such it also depends on the actual existence of that which it refers to. The reader and reality and the relation between the two are equally important and indispensable for the individuation, for the indexical assigning of meaning. Proper names are well-known examples of indices: they refer to a particular individual in extralinguistic reality.

In this context it is necessary to draw attention to the distinction which exists between just any reader and the intended reader. The arbitrary reader may interpret Gen 2-3 as fiction and consequently take the proper name *yhwh elohim* as merely referring to a specific character in the story which is entirely separate from reality. The intended reader of Gen 2-3 on the other hand, is supposed to take *yhwh elohim* as referring to a particular reality, to an existing individual. In other words, the assigning of meaning by the intended reader takes place because this name functions as referring to a factual reality. Interacting with Gen 2-3 the intended reader therefore assigns meaning both by attaching values and appreciations to the text and by relating the textual elements to reality.

The intended reader is also supposed to make a connection between *ha-adam* in Gen 2-3 and himself. The narrator presents the discourse of Gen 2-3 to the reader with the discursive strategy: "this human being, this man or woman, is you." The reader responds to this discursive strategy by making an indexical link with reality. The reader is then allowed to choose whether or not to identify with *ha-adam*. The intended reader is supposed to make the first choice and to conclude: this creation story is about man in general, about man as genus; I am a human being and therefore this is also my creation story. In this way the intended reader can give meaning to himself by the meanings of the text. This does not mean that the reader should identify with each part of the text, that as a human being (man and woman) he should feel obliged to become a farmer, or that she as a woman should bring forth children, but it does mean that the intended reader is supposed to establish an indexical relation between

the discursive network as a whole and himself as living in the world. Since the discursive network implies that man does not find his identity alone, but in relation to YHWH God and earth, the intended reader can conclude from the discourse that he too does not find his identity in himself alone, but in the correlation with YHWH God and earth. The reader is therefore supposed to take part in the identity which man has in Gen 2-3 and which is described in a number of analogous correlations. This means that the text confronts the reader with the fact that he or she is a man or a woman in relation to the others, male or female, but also that he or she bears an individual responsibility towards caring and giving life. But it means most of all that the text confronts the reader with the fact that he should see himself as living in relation to death, as man or woman, as a human being who is formed essentially by his relation with YHWH God and the earth, whereby YHWH God and the earth are determined by man and, therefore, by the reader, too.

## **Samenvatting van**

### **“Een semiotische analyse van Genesis 2-3.**

### **Een semiotische theorie en analysemethode gebruikt bij de analyse van het verhaal van de tuin in Eden.”**

Dit proefschrift is geschreven in de overtuiging dat een tekstinterpretatie dient te worden vooraf gegaan door een verantwoording of bewustmaking van de opvatting van tekst en lezer die men heeft, omdat deze de interpretatie van de tekst wezenlijk bepaalt. Hier is de verantwoording semiotisch georiënteerd, met de grondhypothese dat betekenis niet zonder meer voorhanden is, groeit of voortkomt uit God of uit de wereld, maar dat mensen betekenis geven. Betekenissen worden geproduceerd en gegenereerd door mensen met behulp van tekens die deels bepaald zijn door taal- en cultuurcodes. Deze betekenisgeving of *semiosis* kan resulteren in een tekst. Zo is een bijbeltekst het produkt van een lang proces van betekenisgeving of *semiosis* waarin schrijvers en redacteuren hun ervaringen met God en de wereld vorm hebben gegeven. Deze vormgeving is deels bepaald door wat zij ervaren, dat wil zeggen door God of de wereld buiten henzelf, deels door de taal- en cultuurcode waarin zij hun ervaringen of gedachten uitdrukken en deels door de beoogde functie van hun tekst ten aanzien van een bepaald lezerspubliek of geloofsgemeenschap. In deze studie staat evenwel niet het proces zelf centraal, maar het resultaat ervan: de eindredactionele vormgeving van de bijbeltekst.

In deze semiotisch georiënteerde bestudering van bijbelteksten wordt ook de betekenisgeving van lezers aan een tekst beschouwd als een proces van *semiosis*, waarin én de taal- en cultuurcode van de lezer, én de tekst zelf waarmee de lezer gekonfronteerd wordt, én de eigen gedachten, leef- en leeservaringen, dus de residuen van eerdere processen van betekenisgeving (opvoeding, ervaring, leven en lezen) een rol spelen. Bij tekstlezing is aldus sprake van een proces van *semiosis* dat gelegd wordt over het produkt van een eerder proces van *semiosis*. De lezer wordt hierbij enerzijds gestuurd door de tekstelementen en hun samenhang, door de bepaaldheden van de tekst en anderzijds is hij zelf werkzaam aanwezig in de lezing doordat hij de gaten of ellipsen in de tekst aan- en invult en de tekstelementen op een hiërarchische wijze ordent. Dit interactie-proces tussen tekstuele strategieën of sturingen en de lezer, tussen het produkt van de *semiosis* van de schrijvers of redacteuren enerzijds en de *semiosis* van de lezer anderzijds staat centraal in dit proefschrift. Hierbij is steeds sprake van de beoogde lezer van een tekst, dat wil zeggen de lezer die de tekst voor ogen heeft: de lezer die zowel de Hebreeuwse taal- en cultuurcode beheerst, de bepaaldheden en sturingen van de tekst volgt, als ook de onbepaaldheden en gaten in de tekst aanvult en de mogelijkheden van de tekst benut voor zijn eigen betekenisgeving.

Een analyse onderscheidt zich van een gemiddeld leesproces doordat zij de stappen van het leesproces expliciteert en systematisch uiteenlegt, zodat die voor iedereen te controleren zijn en duidelijk kan worden in welke mate de sturingen en mogelijkheden van de tekst in aanmerking zijn genomen en waar de bijdrage van de analist een rol heeft gespeeld. In dit analyse-model wordt er dus van uit gegaan dat de bijdrage van de lezer en ook die van de analist onontbeerlijk is voor de betekenisgeving.

De beschreven analyse-methode, die geïnspireerd is door de semiotische inzichten van Greimas en Peirce, begint met datgene waarmee de lezer het eerst gekonfronteerd wordt, de buitenkant van de tekst dus, en gaat verder naar onderliggende structuren. Daarom worden in het eerste analyse-onderdeel de expressie-vormen onderzocht. Daarna volgt de bestudering van de verhaalopbouw en -ontwikkeling in de narratieve analyse en worden de betekenissen van de elementen in hun tekstuele samenhang onderzocht in de semantische analyse. Tenslotte wordt de discours in zijn totaliteit bestudeerd in de diskursieve en kommunikatieve analyse. Elk analyse-onderdeel bestaat uit een serie deelonderzoeken die gespecificeerd worden.

Het beschreven semiotische analyse-model wordt gebruikt om het verhaal van de tuin in Eden, zoals dat te vinden is in Genesis 2-3, te onderzoeken. De bedoeling is niet alleen de methode te toetsen maar ook tot een goede interpretatie te komen van Gen 2-3. Vooral de narratieve en semantische analyses zijn hiervoor van elementair belang. De studie van de narratieve structuur en ontwikkeling van Gen 2-3 levert een doorzichtige verhaalopbouw op met de bewerking van de aarde door de mens als narratieve hoofdlijn die wordt ondersteund door andere verhaallijnen. De semantische analyse vertrekt vanuit het onderscheid van vijf betekenislijnen die de hoofdlijnen van Gen 2-3 vormen, te weten de relatie tussen God en mens, mens en aarde, mens en dier, man en vrouw en leven en dood. Deze relaties worden eerst afzonderlijk onderzocht, waarna ze in de diskursieve analyse bij elkaar komen en één geheel vormen waarin de groei van de mens in zijn relatie tot God en de aarde, evenals de groei van God in relatie tot de mens en de aarde, op de voorgrond treedt. De relatie tussen man en vrouw, mens en dier, en leven en dood zijn geordend binnen dit alles omvattende kader van de relatie tussen God, mens en aarde.

Zoals voor elk tekstonderzoek, geldt ook voor de resultaten van dit onderzoek dat de betekenisgeving of interpretatie van de onderzoeker niet alleen door de tekst zelf bepaald is, maar ook door de keuzes die de onderzoeker maakt uit de mogelijkheden die de tekst hem aanbiedt. Aangezien een tekst beschikt over een zeer groot aantal mogelijkheden dat geen enkele lezer kan uitputten, is elke lezing en analyse slechts voorlopig en een fase in een nooit eindigend proces van lezen en betekenis geven.

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## **Genesis 2:4b – 3:24: The Garden of Eden**

2:4b When YHWH God made earth and heaven,  
2:5a no shrub of the field was yet on earth  
2:5a and no plants of the field had yet sprouted,  
2:5b because YHWH God had not let it rain upon the earth  
2:5b and there was no man to till the earth.  
2:6a And a flood welled up from the earth  
2:6b and watered the entire surface of the earth.  
2:7a Then YHWH God formed man from the dust of the earth  
2:7a and blew the breath of life into his nostrils,  
2:7b and man became a living being.  
2:8a YHWH God planted a garden in Eden, in the east,  
2:8b and placed there the man whom He had formed.  
2:9a And from the earth YHWH God caused every tree to grow,  
2:9a desirable to see and good to eat,  
2:9b and the tree of life in the centre of the garden  
2:9b and the tree of the knowledge of good and bad.  
2:10a A river issues from Eden to water the garden,  
2:10b and it then divides and becomes four branches.  
2:11a The name of the first is Pishon, the one that winds  
2:11b through the whole land of Havilah where gold is;  
2:12a and the gold of that land is good;  
2:12b bdellium is there, and onyx stone.  
2:13a The name of the second river is Gihon,  
2:13b the one that winds through the whole land of Cush.  
2:14a The name of the third river is Tigris,  
2:14a the one that flows east of Asshur.  
2:14b And the fourth river is the Euphrates.  
2:15a YHWH God took the man  
2:15b and placed him in the garden of Eden to till it and to guard it.  
2:16a And YHWH God commanded the man, saying,  
2:16b “Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat;  
2:17a but as for the tree of the knowledge of good and bad,  
2:17a you must not eat of it;  
2:17b for as soon as you eat of it, you shall surely die.”  
2:18a YHWH God said, “It is not good for man to be alone,  
2:18b let me make a helper corresponding to him.”  
2:19a And YHWH God formed out of the earth  
2:19b all the animals of the field and all the birds of the sky,  
2:19b and brought them to the man to see what he would call them;  
2:19b and whatever the man called each living creature,  
2:19b that would be its name.  
2:20a And the man gave names to all the cattle  
2:20a and to the birds in the sky and to all the animals of the field.  
2:20b But for man He did not find a helper corresponding to him.

2:21a YHWH God cast a deep sleep upon the man and he slept.  
 2:21b He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at the spot.  
 2:22a And YHWH God fashioned the rib  
 2:22a that He had taken from the man into woman;  
 2:22b and He brought her to man.  
 2:23a Then the man said,  
 2:23a "This one at last, is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh;  
 2:23b this one will be called woman, for she is taken from man."  
 2:24a Hence a man will leave his father and mother,  
 2:24b and will cling to his wife, and they will become one flesh.  
 2:25a The two of them were naked, the man and his wife,  
 2:25b yet they felt no shame.  
 3:1a Now the serpent was the most shrewd  
 3:1a of all the animals of the field YHWH God had made.  
 3:1b He said to the woman, "Did God really say:  
 3:1b You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?"  
 3:2a The woman replied to the serpent,  
 3:2b "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden,  
 3:3a but of the fruit of the tree in the centre of the garden God said:  
 3:3a "You shall not eat of it or touch it,  
 3:3b lest you die."  
 3:4a The serpent said to the woman,  
 3:4b "you are not going to die,  
 3:5a for God knows that as soon as you eat of it  
 3:5a your eyes will be opened  
 3:5b and you will be like God, knowing good and bad."  
 3:6a The woman saw that the tree was good to eat of and a delight  
 3:6a to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to get insight,  
 3:6a and she took of its fruit and ate.  
 3:6b She also gave some to her husband with her and he ate.  
 3:7a Then the eyes of both of them were opened  
 3:7a and they became aware that they were naked;  
 3:7b and they sewed together fig leaves  
 3:7b and made themselves loinclothes.  
 3:8a They heard the sound of YHWH God moving about  
 3:8a in the garden at the breezy time of day;  
 3:8b and the man and his wife hid from YHWH God  
 3:8b among the trees in the garden.  
 3:9a YHWH God called out to man  
 3:9b and said to him, "Where are you?"  
 3:10a He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden,  
 3:10b I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid."  
 3:11a Then He asked, "Who told you that you were naked?"  
 3:11b Did you eat of the tree of which I had forbidden you to eat?"  
 3:12a The man said,



3:12b "The woman You gave me to be with me,  
 3:12b she gave me of the tree, and I ate."  
 3:13a And YHWH God said to the woman,  
 3:13a "What is this you have done!"  
 3:13b The woman replied, "The serpent seduced me, and I ate."  
 3:14a Then YHWH God said to the serpent,  
 3:14a "Because you did this, you are the most cursed of all the cattle  
 3:14a and of all the animals of the field.  
 3:14b On your belly you will crawl  
 3:14b and dirt you will eat all the days of your life.  
 3:15a I will put enmity between you and the woman,  
 3:15a between your seed and her seed;  
 3:15b they will strike at your head,  
 3:15b and you will strike at their heel."  
 3:16a And to the woman He said,  
 3:16a "I will greatly multiply the suffering of your pregnancy;  
 3:16a in pain you will bear children.  
 3:16b For your husband will be your desire,  
 3:16b and he will rule over you."  
 3:17a To the man he said,  
 3:17a "Because you listened to the voice of your wife  
 3:17a and ate of the tree which I commanded you not to eat of,  
 3:17b Cursed will be the earth because of you;  
 3:17b by toil you will eat of it, all days of your life.  
 3:18a Thorns and thistles it will sprout for you.  
 3:18b And you will eat of the plants of the field.  
 3:19a By the sweat of your brow you will get bread to eat,  
 3:19a until you return to the earth from which you are taken.  
 3:19b For dust you are, and to dust you will return."  
 3:20a And the man named his wife Chawwa,  
 3:20b because she is the mother of all living beings.  
 3:21a And YHWH God made garments of skins for man and his wife,  
 3:21b and clothed them.  
 3:22a And YHWH God said,  
 3:22a "Now that man has become like one of us,  
 3:22a knowing good and bad;  
 3:22b what if he should stretch out his hand and take also  
 3:22b from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!"  
 3:23a So YHWH God sent him from the garden of Eden,  
 3:23b to till the earth from which he was taken.  
 3:24a He drove man out,  
 3:24b and placed the kerubim east of the garden of Eden  
 3:24b and the fiery ever-turning sword,  
 3:24b to guard the way to the tree of life.

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## Stellingen

1. Kennen en denken zijn niet te beschouwen als een waarnemen van een bestaande werkelijkheid en evenmin als een konstrueren hiervan door de mens, maar als een genereren van betekenissen of *semiosis*, waarin én een objekt, te weten een werkelijkheid buiten de mens zoals God of de wereld, én een subjekt, te weten de mens, én tekensystemen van vitaal belang zijn.
2. De semiotiek is de leer niet van de tekens, maar van de betekenisgeving door middel van tekens. In die zin zijn semiotiek en hermeneutiek komplementair.
3. De analogische redenering neemt naast de logische redenering een belangrijke plaats in in het kennen en denken.
4. In plaats van betekenisstructuren die een tekst heeft, kan men beter spreken van netwerken van betekenissen die een lezer over de tekst legt. De betekenis is dientengevolge het resultaat van een interactieproces tussen tekst en lezer.
5. Syntaxis, semantiek en pragmatiek zijn niet drie los van elkaar staande onderdelen van de semiotiek, maar de pragmatiek vormt het kader waarbinnen de syntaxis en semantiek vorm krijgen.
6. In de bijbelexegese gaat men er bijna steeds van uit dat betekenissen binnen een teksteenheid statisch zijn. Dat in een tekst niet alleen op narratief, maar ook op semantisch nivo een ontwikkeling plaatsvindt, wordt te weinig onderkend.
7. Het woordenboek of lexikon is gericht op paradigmatische relaties van woorden in een taalsysteem. Het is daarom niet, zoals vele bijbelexegeten menen, het eerst aangewezen instrument om de betekenis van woorden in een tekst te bepalen, aangezien die niet alleen gevormd worden door paradigmatische relaties maar ook door syntagmatische relaties.
8. De *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* stelt ten onrechte voor in Gen 3:17 in plaats van *akal* (eten) *abad* (werken) te lezen.
9. De neiging om een bepaalde theorie tot heilsleer en de voorman/vrouw ervan tot goeroe te verheffen, is fnuikend voor een open wetenschappelijke dialoog en dodelijk voor de ontwikkeling van een wetenschap.
10. De kersttoespraak van Koningin Beatrix op 25 december 1988 is een treffende aktualisering van Genesis 1-3.





